HUGHES HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Whistleblowing Policy

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Executive Summary

Hughes Hall aspires to the highest standards of integrity and conduct. This policy sets out the process for members of the College (apart from students) to raise a whistleblowing concern, as well as the subsequent investigation and the protection from detriment for the individual raising the concern. The aims of this policy are:

•To encourage all members of the College 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 confidentiality will be respected.

•To provide guidance as to how to raise concerns.

•To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

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Approving body: Council	Location: website

1. Policy Purpose

1.1 The College is committed to the highest standards of honesty and integrity and expects all its members to maintain high standards of conduct.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on what constitutes whistleblowing, the protections afforded to whistleblowers, how to raise concerns under this protection and how the College will respond to whistleblowing concerns.

1.3 It further aims to encourage any person 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 confidentiality will be respected. Whistleblowers should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy has been created taking into account the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 legislation that affords legal protection for whistleblowers from negative treatment or unfair dismissal, and with reference to the University of Cambridge Whistleblowing Policy.

2.2 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of College staff or an internal matter, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a customer, supplier or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect whistleblowers if they raise the matter with the third party directly. However, the College encourages individuals to report such concerns internally first, in line with this policy.

2.3 The whistleblower protection covered by the Public Disclosure Act applies specifically to employees and workers. **However, all members of the College (other than students) should follow the same procedure outlined below if they wish to raise concerns and can be assured that the College will offer them the same protection against detrimental treatment as required for employees or workers.**

2.4 This policy is also set out in the Staff Handbook.

2.5 Students who wish to raise concerns should follow the **Student Whistleblowing - making a confidential report** procedure available on the College website at Policies and documents - Hughes Hall.

2.6 To constitute a whistleblowing disclosure under this policy, a complaint must relate to one or more of the following:

- A criminal offence including theft, fraud or bribery, or misuse of charitable funds
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Endangering the health and safety of an individual
- Environmental damage
- Attempts to suppress/conceal information about any of the above issues.

3. Definitions

Whistleblowing	Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to specific activities. The wrongdoing disclosed must be considered to be in the public interest, which means it has to affect others, e.g. criminal offences or health and safety concerns.
Whistleblowing Officer	The person responsible for responding to a Whistleblowing concern. In the College's case, this would be the Bursar in the first instance. If the Bursar is unavailable or conflicted, the concern can be made to the President or the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.
Whistleblowing Disclosure	A complaint relating to any of the matters set out in 2.6.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 All members of the College other than students should follow the same procedure outlined below if they need to raise concerns.

4.2 The Whistleblowing Officer will be responsible for hearing concerns, conducting or commissioning any investigation, and reporting the outcome of any investigation to the College's Governance Committee. If the Whistleblowing Officer is conflicted, they will recuse themselves from the matter immediately and one of the alternates set out in the Definitions section (3.) will assume responsibility for the case. The Whistleblowing Officer will process any personal data in accordance with the College's data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the report is made will be held securely and accessed by individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

4.3 Governance Committee is responsible for receiving the findings of any independent investigation of a whistleblowing disclosure and determining the subsequent course of action. Should any member of Governance Committee be conflicted in relation to the case, they should declare their interest to the Chair at the earliest opportunity to ensure any conflicts are mitigated or managed appropriately.

4.4 In the event an individual believes they are being subjected to detriment by any person within the College as a result of their decision to raise a complaint, they should inform the President or HR Manager immediately in order that appropriate action can be taken to protect them.

5. Policy Statement

5.1 Procedure

5.1.1 A whistleblower should report any concerns promptly and in writing to the Whistleblowing Officer. If the Bursar is unavailable or conflicted, the whistleblower should raise concerns with the President or the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee.

5.1.3 In the event of an anonymous complaint, it will be acted upon as the Whistleblowing Officer sees fit, having due regard to the seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the complaint, the prospects of being able to investigate the matter, and fairness to any individual mentioned in the complaint.

5.1.4 Once a complaint has been raised, the Whistleblowing Officer will arrange a meeting with the whistleblower to discuss the issue. The Whistleblowing Officer will decide whether there is a prima facie case to answer and will decide whether an investigation should be conducted and the form it should take. The whistleblower may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy.

5.1.5 The Whistleblowing Officer will then carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of the investigation. The person raising the concern will be informed of the outcome of the initial assessment with a high-level summary of what has been identified and any next steps (Note: due to GDPR, any individual employment matters will be treated in strict confidence and will not be shared with the whistleblower).

5.1.6 The Whistleblowing Officer may also need to speak with other relevant individuals (e.g. witnesses, relevant parties) who may be able to provide information in connection with the disclosure.

5.1.7 In some cases, the Whistleblowing Officer may appoint an investigator or team of investigators. The Whistleblowing Officer will aim to keep the whistleblower informed of the progress of any investigation and its likely timescale.

5.1.8 The College's Governance Committee will have responsibility for considering the findings of any investigation and determining the appropriate course of action. In the interests of good governance and transparency, the Whistleblowing Officer will keep Governing Body (as the college's trustee body), appraised of any disclosures, investigations and their outcomes.

5.1.9 In the case of a conflict of interest involving the Bursar, President, Chair or Audit and Risk Committee, or members of the Governance Committee, those individuals will not participate in either undertaking or supporting an investigation (apart from providing statements, where requested) or in discussing the case, in order for the process to remain impartial and uncompromised.

5.1.10 If, following investigation, the College concludes that a whistleblower has deliberately made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to a disciplinary investigation that will be managed in accordance with the College's Disciplinary Procedure.

5.1.11 Reports will be maintained for five years.

5.3 External Reporting of Concerns

5.3.1 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for the whistleblower to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator. The College strongly encourages the whistleblower to raise concerns internally before reporting a concern externally.

5.4 Protection of Whistleblowers

5.4.1 Hughes Hall aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

5.4.2 While the College cannot pre-determine that the outcome of an investigation will be satisfactory to the whistleblower, the college is committed to dealing with concerns fairly and appropriately.

5.4.3 Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment (this includes dismissal, disciplinary action, victimisation, harassment or bullying) as a result of raising a genuine concern. Members of the College must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If any member is involved in such conduct they may be subject to disciplinary action. If a whistleblower believes that they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the HR Manager or the President immediately. If the matter is not remedied, the whistleblower can raise it formally using the relevant Grievance Procedure.

5.4.4 If a whistleblower is dissatisfied with the time frame or conduct of the investigation or the way in which the matter has been resolved, they may consider referring the matter to the President for review, provided the President has had no prior involvement in the process or conclusion. There is no further internal recourse once a review has been addressed. The President reserves the right to commission an external, independent outcome review if the matter cannot be addressed satisfactorily through internal processes.

5.4.5 'Protect' operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are given below.

5. 5 Contacts

Bursar Whistleblowing Officer	Laurie Smith bursar@hughes.cam.ac.uk
President	Sir Laurie Bristow president@hughes.cam.ac.uk
Chair of Audit and Risk Committee	Dr Jimmy Chan jc2116@hughes.cam.ac.uk
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 3117 2520 Email via advice line page Website: https://protect-advice.org.uk/

6. Associated Documents

6.1 Whistleblowing procedure for students

6.2 Staff Handbook

(both available on: Policies and documents - Hughes Hall)