

Consumer Protection Statement

Document Summary

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Consumer Protection Statement

1: Overall approach to ensuring compliance with consumer protection law

The College is committed to full compliance with UK consumer protection legislation, specifically the Consumer Rights Act 2015, the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013.

The College adheres to the higher education consumer law guidance issued by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and maintains ongoing compliance with Office for Students (OfS) Condition of Registration C1, which requires registered providers to have due regard to consumer protection guidance in developing and implementing their policies and terms.

Operational compliance is overseen jointly by the Senior Leadership Team and the Academic Board, ensuring pre-contract information, student contracts, and institutional policies are reviewed annually. Independent legal advice is obtained where necessary to ensure terms remain balanced, fair, and transparent.

Oversight has included acting to ensure that:

- Material information provided to prospective and current students is accessible, accurate, comprehensive, timely, transparent and unambiguous. This includes details about the course, teaching methods, assessment, and any mandatory additional costs.
- Information provided is available through a variety of appropriate means, for example, the website, handbooks and the intranet.
- Terms and conditions are fair and balanced.
- Policies, procedures, and terms and conditions are all made available to students prior to application.
- There is consultation as appropriate with existing students through the student representative system and other feedback mechanisms.
- The complaint handling procedure is accessible and fair, with clear steps identified for progressing any complaint that may arise.

Students are advised they have the option of approaching the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) if they are not satisfied with the handling of any complaint, once the internal system has been exhausted.

All student and staff personal data is handled and managed with a high level of sensitivity and confidentiality.

2: Approach to providing information to applicants and students: research and application stage, offer stage and enrolment stage

2.1: Research and application stage

The college websites provide all the key information needed regarding, for example, courses, admissions, and fees. All information provided constitutes 'material information' as defined by the CMA, including details on learning and teaching methods, contact hours, and any mandatory additional costs.

Course information includes, for example, start dates, mode of study, duration, awarding body, qualification title and level, fees, who the course is intended for, aims of the course, course structure, course content, opportunities for further study or employment, entry requirements, and application process.

Business courses: All information can be found at <https://citycollege.ac.uk/>
Acupuncture courses: All information can be found at <https://citycollegeofacupuncture.com/>

Course information is also provided in programme handbooks. All information is checked on a termly or annual basis to keep it accurate and up-to-date.

2.2: Offer stage

Students will see the terms and conditions when completing the application form and need to read and agree to these before submitting their application. The interview is designed to ensure that students are fully aware of what to expect.

By the offer stage, applicants will have received all material pre-contract information, including current terms and conditions, completed an admissions interview, and provided verified evidence of English language proficiency in line with the Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy.

Where an applicant is accepted, the College issues a formal offer letter setting out any conditions of admission, total tuition fees, payment schedules, and essential course requirements. The offer is determined on the basis of submitted qualification certificates, verified English language proficiency or exemption eligibility, application documentation, and interview performance.

In accordance with the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013, applicants entering into a distance contract have a statutory right to cancel their agreement within a 14-day cooling-off period. This 14-day period begins on the date the applicant accepts the formal offer of a place.

Students are reminded about the fee requirements and that enrolment cannot be confirmed until action towards payment of fees has been confirmed.

In addition, the students receive an induction pack, which includes term dates, a student handbook and other valid paperwork as well as an invitation to attend induction.

2.3: Enrolment stage

Enrolment is confirmed once attendance, payment evidence and, if applicable, registration with the awarding body has been secured.

2.4: Dealing with changes

The College endeavours to deliver programmes in accordance with published descriptions. Where unforeseen operational circumstances necessitate a material change to course delivery, modules, teaching locations, or assessment methods prior to or after enrolment, the College communicates these proposals promptly in writing to all affected offer holders and students.

Where a proposed modification constitutes a major change to material information, the College will seek explicit student agreement. Where a student does not agree to a major variation, the College will provide individual academic guidance, assistance with transferring to a suitable alternative course or provider, or the option to withdraw with a full refund of tuition fees paid, in accordance with the Student Protection Plan and the Refund and Compensation Policy.

3: Contract terms and conditions

Terms and conditions, including rules and regulations, are made available to students through the application form, induction pack, and student handbooks. These are all provided to students before enrolment, and we ensure that terms and conditions and regulations are clear and understandable.

Students seeking enrolment onto an acupuncture programme are also advised about DBS check requirements.

We ensure the terms are fair by ensuring that any change to the terms and conditions is made only after review by our legal counsel, in consideration of the CMA Guidance.

4: Complaint handling processes and practices

The College complaints procedure is made available at <https://www.citycollege.ac.uk/admissions-appeals-and-comp> as well as being featured at student induction, made available on the intranet and made available in student handbooks.

A strong 'open door' policy is operated at the College and students are encouraged to bring any concerns they may have directly to senior staff.

The complaints procedure is comprised of an informal stage intended for an early resolution through discussion, a formal stage where the complaint is written down and investigated by senior staff, and a review stage where the formal complaint decision can be looked at again if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.

The procedure comprises three internal stages, progressing from informal resolution through to formal investigation and an internal review stage overseen by senior leadership.

Following the exhaustion of internal processes, registered students are issued a Completion of Procedures letter and may escalate eligible complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Prospective applicants who have not yet enrolled cannot access the OIA Scheme, but may challenge admissions decisions under the separate Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure or seek independent guidance through the Citizens Advice Consumer Service.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator's good practice framework is used for guidance and to help ensure that the College's policy is compliant with expectations regarding accessibility, fairness, clarity, independence, proportionality, confidentiality, and timeliness, and to improve the student experience.

5:Useful Links

- Office for Students (OfS) Guidance: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/student-protection-and-support/students-as-consumers/>
- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers>
- Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA): <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>
- Your Consumer Rights as a Student (CMA Guide): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-a-short-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students>