

<b>Whistleblowing Policy</b>	
<b><u>Review Committee:</u></b>	College Committee
<b><u>Review of Policy:</u></b>	May 2024
<b><u>Date of Next Review:</u></b>	Easter 2027 (or earlier if legislation changes)
<b><u>Responsible Officer and Location of Policy:</u></b>	Bursar/HR Manager: Cascade-Networx HR system, College website
<b><u>Accessible to:</u></b>	Non-academic and Academic (Primary) Staff members (‘Employee’) Fellows, all members of the Senior Common Room

### Revision History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Summary of change</b>	<b>Governing Body approval</b>	<b>Date of next review</b>
1.0	Bursar	New policy approved by Governing Body.	<i>GB Minute:</i> <i>8572(a)(ii)</i> June 2024	Easter 2027

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This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended at any time, and we may depart from it depending on the circumstances of any case.

The College is committed to the principles of equal opportunities in employment for all. This policy will be applied equitably and fairly and aims to ensure that no employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, disability marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity or sexual orientation.

## 1. Policy Statement

1.1 We are committed to conducting our affairs in a responsible and transparent way and to take account of the requirements of our funding bodies for the proper use of public funds and of the standards required in public life. In addition, the College is committed to the principles of academic freedom embodied in its Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations, and enshrined in the Education Reform Act 1988. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) came into effect on 2 July 1999 and provided a framework of protection against detriment or dismissal for raising concerns about certain matters of public interest and encourages the resolution of problems within the workplace. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.

1.2 The aims of this policy are:

- 1.1.1 To encourage Staff 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;
- 1.1.2 To provide Staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns; and/or
- 1.1.3 To reassure Staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

## 2. Who is covered by this policy?

2.1 This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels of the College community, including College Officers, Fellows, members of the Senior Common Room, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term workers, casual and agency staff (collectively referred to as 'Staff' in this policy). This policy does not apply to students.

## 3. What is Whistleblowing?

3.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work.

This may include:

- 3.1.1 criminal activity;
- 3.1.2 miscarriages of justice;
- 3.1.3 danger to health and safety;
- 3.1.4 damage to the environment;
- 3.1.5 failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- 3.1.6 bribery;
- 3.1.7 financial fraud or mismanagement;
- 3.1.8 negligence.
- 3.1.9 breach of our internal policies and procedures;

- 3.1.10 conduct likely to damage our reputation;
  - 3.1.11 unauthorised disclosure of confidential information; and
  - 3.1.12 the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.
- 3.2 A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.
- 3.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate.
- 3.4 If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from the Whistleblowing Officer, whose contact details are at the end of this policy.

#### **4. Raising a Whistleblowing Concern**

- 4.1 Concerns are better raised in writing, and you should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reasons why you are concerned about the situation. If you do not feel able to put your concern in writing, you can telephone or meet the appropriate person. It is important that, however, the concern is raised, you make it clear that you are raising the issue via the Whistleblowing Policy.
- 4.2 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases, they may refer the matter to the **Whistleblowing Officer – the Bursar**.
- 4.3 However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact one of the following:
- 4.3.1 The Whistleblowing Officer, or
  - 4.3.2 The Master.
- Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.
- 4.4 We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.
- 4.5 We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

#### **5. Confidential**

- 5.1 We hope that Staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to protect your identity if confidentially

is requested. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

- 5.2 We do not encourage Staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Whistleblowing Officer or the Master and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## **6. External Disclosures**

- 6.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating, and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- 6.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely if ever be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.
- 6.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our Staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a student, supplier, or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise the matter with the third party directly. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your line manager or one of the other individuals set out in paragraph 4 for guidance.

## **7. Investigation and Outcome**

- 7.1 Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information.
- 7.2 In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including Staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.
- 7.3 We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.
- 7.4 If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **8. If you are not satisfied**

- 8.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.
- 8.2 If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with one of the other key contacts in paragraph 4. Alternatively, you may contact the chair of the College Committee (if different from the Master) or our external auditors. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

## **9. Protection and support for Whistleblowers**

- 9.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support Staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 9.2 Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment because of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats, or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing Officer immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.
- 9.3 Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases, the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

## **10. Responsibility for the success of this policy**

- 10.1 The College Committee has overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.
- 10.2 The Whistleblowing Officer has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy and must ensure that all managers and other Staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.
- 10.3 The Whistleblowing Officer, in conjunction with the College Committee should review this policy from a legal and operational perspective at least once a year.
- 10.4 All Staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions, and queries should be addressed to the Whistleblowing Officer.

**11. Contacts**

Whistleblowing Officer (Bursar)	01223 332070 <a href="mailto:bursar@fitz.cam.ac.uk">bursar@fitz.cam.ac.uk</a>
Master (Chair of College Committee)	01223 332029 <a href="mailto:master@fitz.cam.ac.uk">master@fitz.cam.ac.uk</a>
The College's external auditors	Peters Elworthy & Moore 01223 728222 <a href="mailto:pem@pem.co.uk">pem@pem.co.uk</a>
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 3117 2520 Website: <a href="https://protect-advice.org.uk">https://protect-advice.org.uk</a>