



UNITED CENTRE
of
EXCELLENCE

End Point Assessment Policies

Whistleblowing Policy
GP22



Document History

Version	Date	Reason for Revision	Issued by
V1.1	Jan 2020	Initial release	Harj Dhanjal GP22
V1.2	Nov 2020	Document review during covid-19 (Continuity plan diagram added)	Alan Bates GP22
V1.3	Jul 2021	Review of the policy for our Ofqual recognition submission	Alan Bates GP22
V1.4	Feb 2024	External policy review and update	Alan Bates GP22
V1.5	July 2025	Review of the policy and practice for an update to the policy	Alan Bates

Area	Original	Updated	Ofqual Reference
Terminology	IFATE	Replaced with Skills England	N/A
Policy Alignment	General Ofqual mention	Explicit alignment with Conditions A8, B3, H1	A8.1, B3.2, H1.2
Reporting Mechanism	Internal reporting	Added secure, anonymous digital reporting channel	A8.2
Training	Induction only	Annual whistleblowing training for all staff	B3.1



Oversight	Senior Team review	Quarterly review of trends and anonymised reporting	A8.3
Transparency	Internal logs	Annual publication of anonymised statistics	A8.4



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Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction and Purpose

This policy and procedure seek to engender a culture whereby wrongdoing of any sort is recognised and properly dealt with. It aims to encourage staff members to raise genuine concerns through internal procedures without fear of adverse repercussions being taken against them. Its ambition is to ensure that risks are identified, mitigated, and managed in UCE.

The principles of openness and accountability which underpin legislation protecting whistle blowers are reflected in this policy and procedure

The policy provides a definition of whistleblowing. It states how we ensure staff are able to report concerns, secure in the knowledge that their disclosure or allegation will be properly handled, without fear of recrimination. It explains how we respond to, investigate, handle and record whistleblowing reports. It also explains how staff can raise concerns externally.

2. Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is when a report is made about a suspected wrongdoing which is in the public interest. This is referred to as making a disclosure in the public interest. A whistle blower is someone who raises serious concern about wrongdoing or malpractice so that problems can be identified and resolved quickly.

3. Policy Statement

As an Ofqual recognised end point assessment organisation we are committed to ensuring that end point assessment and any other assessment is valid, authentic and reliable. UCE will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this policy effectively. Our policies represent our commitment to ensure there are no adverse effects to learners and, should that be the case, that Ofqual is informed of any such adverse effect in a timely manner.

UCE is committed to operating in accordance with its values. The procedure provides staff members with a means for raising genuine concerns of suspected bribery, breaches of the law and other serious wrongdoings.



4. Scope:

The policy focuses on whistleblowing and how wrongdoing is reported. The reporting of concerns may relate to other policies and forms of risks assessment. This policy should be read in conjunction with the UCE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, the Plagiarism Policy and the Grievance Procedure.

5. Legislation and compliance

The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998, and subsequently the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013, protects a member of staff against detriment or dismissal for raising concerns about matters in the public interest. The Act seeks to ensure that any person suspecting malpractice knows how to raise concerns and what procedures are in place to deal with the concern. This may include compliance with the Bribery Act 2010.

The policy relates to conditions A and H of the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition.

6. Responsibilities

During induction, all employees must be made aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and need to sign to confirm their understanding and acceptance of the requirements and process set out within it. (See Induction Work Record).

Senior staff at UCE are responsible for ensuring the whistleblowing procedure is followed and for investigating allegations and recording results and outcomes.

The Senior Team has oversight of the policy.

7. Policy:

- 7.1 UCE encourages staff members to raise genuine concerns about suspected wrongdoing at the earliest practicable stage.
- 7.2 Staff members are encouraged to report malpractice. The person making the disclosure must have a reasonable belief that it is in the public interest for protection to apply.
- 7.3 This policy and procedure are intended to provide safeguards to enable staff to raise concerns about malpractice in connection with UCE.
- 7.4 The law allows staff members to raise such concerns externally and this policy informs staff members how they can do so. However, a failure to raise a concern under this procedure may result in a disclosure losing its protected status under the law.



7.5 This policy and procedure seek to balance the need to allow a culture of openness with the need to protect other staff members against vexatious allegations or allegations which are not well-founded.

7.6 This policy and procedure are designed for the use of staff members. Learners are should raise genuine concerns about suspected wrongdoing using the Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy and Procedure.

8. Applicability of this policy and procedure

8.1. This policy applies to all employees, including apprentices and any casual workers, home-based or casual workers etc.

8.2. Staff might be unsure whether it is appropriate to raise their concern under this policy and procedure or whether it is a personal grievance, which is more appropriate to raise under the grievance procedure. Any staff member in this situation is encouraged to refer to Sections 9 and 10 and if still unsure to contact a director in confidence for advice. Alternatively, Section contains details on how to obtain external confidential advice on whistleblowing issues.

9. Protected disclosures

9.1. Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Enterprise and Regularity Reform Act 2013 the disclosure of confidential information in the public interest is a lawful act and a member of staff cannot be dismissed, disciplined or unfavourably treated provided:

9.1.1. The procedure has been followed

9.1.2. The employee has acted in the public interest and not for personal gain or out of personal motives. Under no circumstances should staff members talk to the media or to any other person or body without first exhausting the proper procedure.

10. Specific subject matter

10.1. A staff member must use this policy and procedure if, in the course of employment, they become aware of information which they reasonably believe tends to show one or more of the following:

10.1.1. A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed

10.1.2. An individual has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject



10.1.3. A miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur

10.1.4. The health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be, endangered

10.1.5. The environment, has been, is being, or is likely to be, damaged.

10.1.6. Information tending to show any of the above, is being, or is likely to be, deliberately concealed.

10.2. Complaints about disputes/dissatisfaction in employment should be dealt with under the Grievance Procedure. For instance, complaints about breaches of an employee's own contract of employment should be raised as a grievance.

11. Procedure for making a disclosure

11.1. Information which a staff member reasonably believes to show one or more of the situations given in Section 10.1 should be disclosed promptly to a director or HR so that any appropriate action can be taken.

11.2. Staff are encouraged to identify themselves when making a disclosure. If an anonymous disclosure is made, UCE will not be in a position to notify the individual making the disclosure of the outcome of action taken. Anonymity also means that UCE will have difficulty in undertaking an investigation. UCE reserves the right to determine whether to apply this procedure in respect of an anonymised disclosure in light of the following considerations:

11.2.1. The seriousness of the issues raised in the disclosure

11.2.2. The credibility of the concern

11.2.3. How likely it is that the concern can be confirmed from attributable sources.

11.3. For further guidance in relation to this policy and procedure, or concerning the use of the whistleblowing and disclosure procedure generally, employees should speak in confidence to a director.

12. Procedure for investigation of a disclosure

12.1. When a staff member makes a disclosure, the recipient will acknowledge its receipt, in writing, normally within 5 working days.

12.2. The recipient will then determine whether or not they believe that the disclosure is wholly without substance or merit. If the recipient considers that the disclosure does not have sufficient merit to warrant further action, the staff member will be notified in writing of the reasons for that decision and advised that no further action will be taken under this policy and procedure.



Considerations to be taken into account when making this determination may include (but is not limited to) the following:

- 12.2.1. If the recipient is satisfied that a staff member does not have a reasonable belief that suspected malpractice is occurring
- 12.2.2. If the matter is already the subject of legal proceedings or appropriate action by an external body
- 12.2.3. If the matter is already subject to another, appropriate UCE procedure.
- 12.3. When a staff member makes a disclosure which has sufficient substance or merit warranting further action, the recipient will take action it deems appropriate (including action under any other applicable UCE policy or procedure). Possible actions could include internal investigation, referral to UCE's auditors, referral to relevant external bodies such as the police, Ofsted, Ofqual, ESFA, Skills England, Health and Safety Executive or the Information Commissioner's Office.
- 12.4. If appropriate, any internal investigation would be conducted by a UCE director without any direct association with the individual to whom the disclosure relates, or by an external investigator appointed by UCE, as appropriate.
- 12.5. Any recommendations for further action resulting from the investigation, will be addressed to the CEO or other director as appropriate in the circumstances. They will take all steps within their power to ensure the recommendations are implemented unless there are good reasons for not doing so.
- 12.6. The staff member making the disclosure will be notified of the outcome of any action taken by UCE under this policy and procedure within a reasonable period of time. If the staff member is not satisfied that their concern has been appropriately addressed, they can appeal against the outcome by raising the issue with a director or HR within 7 working days. The MD (or nominated director) will make a final decision on action to be taken and notify the staff member making the disclosure.

Guidance note: The procedure should encourage the expeditious investigation of disclosures and can specify timelines for different stages of the procedure. However, timescales should be flexible as different types of concerns will require varying time for investigation. All communications with the staff member making the disclosure should be in writing and sent to the staff member's home address rather than through internal mail. If investigations into the concern are prolonged, UCE should keep the staff member concerned updated as to the progress of the investigation and an estimated timeframe for its conclusion.



13. Safeguards for employees making a disclosure

- 13.1. A staff member making a disclosure under this procedure can expect their matter to be treated confidentially by UCE and, where applicable, their name will not be disclosed to anyone implicated in the suspected wrongdoing, without their prior approval.
Guidance note: For confidentiality purposes, if the staff member requests to raise their concern verbally, it would be appropriate for UCE to allow the staff member to do so.
- 13.2. UCE will take all reasonable steps to ensure that any report of recommendations, or other relevant documentation, produced does not identify the staff member making the disclosure without their written consent, or unless UCE is legally obliged to do so, or for the purposes of seeking legal advice.
- 13.3. No formal disciplinary action will be taken against a staff member on the grounds of making a disclosure made under this policy or procedure. This does not prevent UCE from bringing disciplinary action against a staff member where UCE has grounds to believe that a disclosure was made maliciously or where a disclosure is made outside UCE without reasonable grounds.
- 13.4. A staff member will not be dismissed or suffer any detrimental action or omission of any type (including informal pressure or any form of victimisation) by UCE for making a disclosure in accordance with this policy and procedure. Equally, where a staff member is threatened, bullied, pressured or victimised by a colleague for making a disclosure, disciplinary action will be taken by UCE against the colleague in question.
- 13.5. UCE will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of staff members who make disclosures. If, at any stage of this procedure a staff member feels that they are being subject to informal pressures, bullying or harassment due to making a disclosure, they should raise this matter, in writing, to a director or HR.

14. Disclosure to external bodies

- 14.1. This policy and procedure have been designed to allow staff members to raise disclosures internally within UCE. A staff member has the right to make a disclosure outside UCE where there are reasonable grounds to do so and in accordance with the law.
- 14.2. Staff members may make a disclosure to an appropriate external body prescribed by the law. This list of prescribed organisations and bodies can be found in information on the GOV.UK website: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies-- 2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies)
- 14.3. Staff members can also make disclosures on a confidential basis to a practising solicitor or barrister.



14.4. If a staff member seeks advice outside UCE, they must be careful not to breach any confidentiality obligations or damage UCE's reputation in so doing.

15. Accountability and record keeping

15.1. UCE will keep a record of all concerns raised under this policy and procedure (including cases where UCE deems that there is no case to answer and therefore that no action should be taken). See Whistleblowing Record.

16. Getting free, confidential advice to people concerned about crime, danger or wrongdoing at work

16.1. Staff members can contact Public Concern at Work. Public Concern at Work for confidential advice on whistleblowing issues. Contact details are as follows:

3rd Floor, Bank Chambers
6 – 10 Borough High Street
London
SE1 9QQ

Whistleblowing Advice Line: 020 7404 6609
<http://www.pcaw.org.uk/>

17. Policy Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed, and updated as required but not less than annually, by the UCE Senior Team.

The review of the policy and procedure aims to ensure that lessons are learnt following incidents of whistleblowing, opportunities for continuous improvement are identified and that the procedure continues to be consistent with regulatory criteria (Ofqual, ESFA, Skills England).

Modern Whistleblowing Best Practices:

- UCE will maintain a secure, anonymous digital reporting channel for whistleblowing disclosures.



- All whistleblowing reports will be logged in a centralised register with restricted access.
- Annual whistleblowing training will be provided to all staff, including examples of protected disclosures.
- Whistleblowing outcomes will be reviewed quarterly by the Senior Team to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- UCE will publish anonymised whistleblowing statistics annually to promote transparency and accountability.