

## De Montfort University – Whistle-blowing Policy for Students

1. This De Montfort University (“the University”) policy on raising concerns in relation to malpractice respects the current legal requirements in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The policy outlines the procedures for reporting any concerns through the appropriate channels.
2. Any student (irrespective of the nature or term of their study) is entitled to raise concerns about perceived irregularities in the governance and running of the University, or the activities of its staff or students, without fear of victimisation or harassment or detrimental effect on his/her academic results.
3. In line with other public bodies the University has a duty to conduct its affairs in a responsible way and as such the University will treat all concerns raised seriously.
4. This policy outlines a process whereby students can raise genuine and legitimate concerns **internally** without fear of victimisation or being placed in a moral dilemma with the route of public disclosure as the sole means of action. It provides an opportunity for those concerns to be investigated and for appropriate action to be taken to ensure that the matter is resolved effectively within the University wherever possible. Procedures for students wishing to raise concerns about an external organisation, for example a placement provider, will be covered later in this policy.
5. This policy is not intended to replace the existing Student Complaints and Academic Appeals procedures – further details on which can be found at:  
<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/dmu-students/the-student-gateway/academic-support-office/academic-support-office.aspx>.  
In addition, this policy should not be used to pursue any private or personal dispute or to question management decisions taken by the University.
6. The following are examples of malpractice which may be covered under this policy:
  - criminal offences that have been, are being, or are likely to be committed, for example financial irregularity, fraud, bribery or corruption;
  - failure to comply with a legal or regulatory obligation;
  - failure to report a serious incident;
  - endangering the health & safety of an individual;
  - endangering the environment;
  - miscarriage of justice;
  - attempts to conceal information relating to any of the above.
7. All steps will be taken to protect students raising concerns in good faith by maintaining confidentiality as far as is reasonable and consistent with progressing the matter. Students are encouraged to put their names to any disclosures, as

concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered at the discretion of the University. Students must accept that, in some circumstances, it may inevitably be possible to deduce their identity and as such confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

8. Any concern raised in accordance with this policy will be treated seriously. The University will investigate, promptly and thoroughly, all concerns raised in accordance with this policy and will take appropriate action. The student will be kept informed of progress where appropriate and reasonable.
9. Any allegations which are found to be malicious, vexatious or frivolous will be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence by the University and students will become subject to the University's disciplinary procedures. Similarly, any victimisation of a student who raises a concern by a staff member or fellow student will lead to said person becoming subject to the relevant University disciplinary procedure.
10. In the first instance, the student should request a meeting to discuss the matter with the Student Appeals & Conduct Officer who will keep a written record of this meeting. The Student Appeals & Conduct Officer will refer the matter to the Director of Student & Academic Services and a decision will be taken as to whether the matter will be investigated internally, referred to the police or independently investigated. This will be dependent on the nature and severity of the allegations made.
11. The student concerned will have no responsibility for investigating the matter, although it is likely they will be required to give a formal statement.
12. The Head of Governance & Legal Services will be kept informed of all developments and will ensure, through a review of any investigation, that the procedure and any investigation are fair, thorough and impartial and that the process is fully documented.
13. If a student wishes to raise a concern about a placement provider, this should normally be raised in the first instance through the placement provider's procedures, which will be outlined in the placement learning agreement or contract. However, if a student does not feel able to raise it directly with their placement supervisor/mentor/practice educator, then the matter should be raised through the University's internal procedures, and the University will then raise it with the organisation in question on the student's behalf. Before contacting any placement provider the Student Appeals & Conduct Officer or Director of Student & Academic Services will liaise with the appropriate Dean of Faculty or Head of School.
14. The University has a duty of care to ensure that no student who has raised concerns about a placement provider will be victimised and takes such responsibilities seriously. Concerns will be raised with the appropriate senior staff at the placement

provider should any evidence of victimisation be brought to the University's attention.

**Student & Academic Services, March 2013**