



Whistle-Blowing Policy

Definition of whistleblowing:

Whistleblowing is a term used when an individual raises a genuine concern relating to wrongdoing or suspected malpractice and/or covering up of a malpractice or wrongdoing occurring in an organisation. The alleged malpractice may be classified in many ways, for example, a violation of a law, rule, regulation and/or a direct threat to public interest such as fraud, health & safety violations and corruption.

Whistleblowing is distinct from both complaints and employment disputes or grievances that an individual may have. A complaint can be defined as an expression of personal dissatisfaction. Please refer to LEC's Complaints Policy for further information.

An individual may decide to make a disclosure to LEC's Centre Manager or to the awarding organisation (EAL) in order to prevent harm or to hold the individual(s) or organisation to account, but if the breach is regarding their own employment contract then it will be precluded as the company grievance procedure should be utilised for this.

Purpose of this policy:

This policy sets out our approach to receiving information from those who wish to make certain disclosures to us on matters relating to London Electrical College, learners or the public that have the potential to adversely affect the delivery of the electrical courses.

This policy is designed to encourage the whistle-blower to feel confident to raise concerns and to provide an avenue for doing so. LEC's commitment to responding to such concerns can be made without fear of reprisal or victimisation. If you have a genuine concern then your disclosure should be made in the reasonable belief that it will tend to show malpractice or impropriety.

We would encourage you to first raise a concern internally within our organisation, however, if you remain concerned or if your concern has not been appropriately addressed, or that you feel unable to raise a concern internally; the individual should contact EAL and follow the procedure outlined in their whistle-blowing policy.

LEC is committed to high standards of openness and accountability and we encourage centre staff, learners and any other interested parties to come to us and voice their genuine concerns about any aspect of the development and delivery of courses.

Communication, Training and Staff Awareness:

London Electrical College is committed to ensuring that all staff understand their responsibilities under this Whistle-Blowing Policy.

The policy will be:

- Communicated to all staff during induction;
- Made accessible to staff and learners via the College's policy repository; and
- Revisited periodically as part of staff briefings or compliance updates.

Where appropriate, staff will receive guidance or training to ensure they understand how to identify, report and escalate whistle-blowing concerns safely and appropriately.

The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring staff awareness and for monitoring compliance with this policy.

How to raise a concern:

You may notify us of a whistleblowing disclosure by speaking to the centre manager on 020 3343 6331 or via email to: info@londonelectricalcollege.com

Process:

The whistle-blowing process will normally follow these stages:

1. Disclosure received – a concern is raised verbally or in writing.
2. Initial review – the disclosure is acknowledged and reviewed to determine appropriate action.
3. Investigation – where appropriate, an investigation is conducted.
4. Outcome and action – findings are considered and appropriate action taken.
5. Feedback – where contact details are provided, the whistle-blower is informed of the outcome where possible.

We will ask you to provide us with sufficient information over the phone or via email to enable us to effectively follow through on your disclosure, asking you to provide as much information/evidence as possible.

We will consider each disclosure sensitively and carefully and decide upon an appropriate initial response. We may share with third parties information received in the disclosure where we consider it necessary to do so.

We will base any investigation on the disclosure given at the time. Any new information received after an investigation has commenced will be treated as a separate investigation.

There may also be occasions where it is not appropriate for us to investigate due to circumstances, such as the disclosure falling outside our remit. In this case we may recommend another course of action.

Due to the varied nature of whistleblowing disclosures, timescales for investigations may vary considerably. If you choose to make a disclosure to us, provided you have given your contact details, we will send you an initial acknowledgement within two working days. We will write to you again to confirm

how your disclosure will be addressed. We reserve the right to cease corresponding with a whistle-blower where we believe, in our reasonable opinion, the disclosure may be vexatious.

Confidentiality:

LEC will treat disclosures sensitively and as far as we are able, treat the information confidentially. We will endeavour to keep the identity of a whistle-blower confidential, where asked to do so, although we cannot guarantee this if doing so would hinder any investigation and we may need to disclose your identity if required by law.

Whistle-blowers should be aware that identity may be recognised due to the circumstances of the disclosure, although we will endeavour to eliminate the risk in all cases. Please also be aware that the source of the information may be revealed during the investigation itself and in serious concerns the Whistle-blower may be asked to provide a statement or even come forward as a witness.

LEC recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the alleged malpractice or wrongdoing. We will treat all disclosures within our control in confidence.

Legislation and Guidance:

This Whistle-Blowing Policy is informed by and operates in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, including but not limited to:

- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998;
- Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended); and
- Guidance issued by awarding organisations and regulatory bodies.

London Electrical College will review this policy to ensure ongoing compliance with legislative and regulatory changes.

Privacy Statement:

It is necessary for us to collect and hold personal information about you in order to investigate your concern(s). We will hold the information you provide to us securely and use it to help us handle and process your whistleblowing disclosure. For more information please access our data protection policy.

What personal data we collect and who has access to it:

We will ask for your name and contact details. If you are worried about being identified as a whistle-blower, you can make a disclosure to LEC anonymously. We treat anonymous disclosures just as seriously as those made openly. However, if you do make a disclosure anonymously, we may not be able to investigate your concerns as effectively.

To ensure LEC deals with your allegation equally and fairly, all disclosures will be forwarded to the centre manager who is responsible for compliance and regulation within the centre.

Your information will be shared internally with limited LEC staff in relevant departments in order that we can handle, investigate and respond to your disclosure.

We may also share your information with other organisations, such as the regulators, the awarding body (EAL), government departments, enforcement agencies and the police if we think it is necessary to do so. There may also be certain circumstances where we are required, by law, to share your information.

If the information given refers to malpractice or maladministration whether by learners or staff at LEC, then it is the centre manager's duty to inform the awarding organisation (EAL) at the earliest opportunity.

Getting advice:

If you need independent advice about a whistleblowing issue you can telephone Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 who offer free, confidential advice to people concerned about crime, danger or wrongdoing at work.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 exists to ensure that any worker, who discloses information, will be legally protected from being disciplined, dismissed or victimised by the employer as a result of their action. Protection under this legislation is a matter between the employer and worker and this Policy does not cover that relationship.

Review arrangements:

We will review this policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it in line with any feedback from customers, learners, regulatory authorities or external agencies, or changes in our practices.

Contact us:

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the centre manager on 020 3343 6331 or via email to: info@londonelectricalcollege.com or via post to:

Centre Manager, London Electrical College
North Finchley Library,
Ravensdale Avenue,
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