



## **Consumer Rights Policy**

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## Document Version Control

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author
1	05/18	N/A	N/A	AM
2	12/18	Addition of information on how students are communicated with and involved in review; inclusion of reference to Student Protection Plan; addition of info about consumer law: addition of links to CMA guide.	Annual Review	JY
3	08/24	Updated with reference to <i>UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law Helping you comply with your obligations (31 May 2023 CMA)</i>	Annual Review	Provost

This Consumer Rights Policy will be reviewed annually by our Head of Quality. Any amendments require the approval of our College Oversight Board.

This Policy is available on the College website, and is referenced in the Student Handbook.

If required, hard copy or large format edition may be requested from Student Services.

# 1 Introduction

Students at Brit College, as customers and consumers, should expect their rights to be protected under the relevant legislation. In particular, the Consumer Rights Act of 2015 affords certain rights as consumers to students and places obligations on the College. The establishment of the Office for Students (OfS) further enhances the rights of students in matters related to their student experience.

## 2 Purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the rights of students as consumers are fully implemented by the College. Information relating to consumer protection should be easy to understand, concise and transparent.

## 3 The Consumer Rights Act 2015

The Consumer Rights Act 2015 became law on 1 October 2015, replacing three major pieces of consumer legislation: the Sale of Goods Act, Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations, and the Supply of Goods and Services Act. It was introduced to simplify, strengthen and modernise the law, giving you clearer consumer rights.

## 4 Students' Rights under Consumer Law

Under consumer law, students have rights regarding:

- **Information provision:** the need to provide up front, clear, accurate, comprehensive, unambiguous and timely information to prospective and current students.
- **Terms and conditions:** the need for terms and conditions that apply to students to be fair and balanced. HE providers should not rely on terms that could disadvantage students.
- **Complaint handling processes and practices:** the need to ensure that complaint handling processes and practices are accessible, clear and fair to students..

## 5 Information Provision

The College must provide clear, accurate, intelligible, unambiguous and timely information about:

### 5.1 Information provided prior to application.

This is defined by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) as information that allows you to make “an informed choice about which universities and courses to apply for” and covers course information and course costs.

#### 5.1.1 Course Information

Course information provided should be:

- The course title

- The entry requirements
- The core modules
- The composition of the course
- Method of study (full-time/part-time)
- Specification: the overall method(s) of assessment for the course
- The award to be received on successful completion of the programme of study (exit award and credits)
- The location of study
- The length of the course
- Whether the course and university partner (if applicable) are regulated and by whom
- Whether the course is accredited, for example by a professional body
- Any other particular terms and conditions

### **5.1.2 Course Costs**

Information provided should include clear and accurate information on:

- Tuition fees
- Any other extra costs
- How fees and any other costs are payable and when you are liable for payment
- Refund arrangements

## **6 Terms and Conditions**

Terms and conditions are, for example, rules and regulations and your rights and obligations to the College and the College's obligations to you. According to consumer law, the higher education providers' terms and conditions that apply to students must be fair, accessible and transparent. All terms and conditions should be brought to students' attention before an offer of a place is accepted.

Brit College's Terms and Conditions can be accessed in the Policies and Forms section of the Student Life area of our website.

## **7 Complaint Handling Processes and Practices**

The higher education provider's complaint handling procedures and practices need to be easy to locate, accessible, clear and fair to students. The College provides details of its complaints procedure in the Student Handbook, on its website and on Moodle (our Virtual Learning

Environment). For full details see our Complaints Policy which can be accessed in the Policies section of the Student Life area of our website.

## 8 What you can do if you have a concern

If you think the College may not have met its obligations under consumer law you may want, in the first instance, to discuss this with:

- the College – by speaking to College staff, such as those who have a role in delivering the course or who have a student advisory role
- your Student Representative, local student union or NUS representative; or Citizens Advice (England, Wales and Scotland)

You can also report your concerns to the CMA or, if you have exhausted the College's complaints process and still do not feel your issue has been addressed, then you can refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). However, they will only consider your concern if you have exhausted the College's complaints procedures first (see our Complaints Policy).

## 9 Related Internal Policies and External Reference Points

### 9.1 Internal Policies

- Student Protection Plan
- Student Fees and Refunds Policy
- Admissions, Applications and Enrolment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

### 9.2 External Reference Points

- Competition and Market Authority's Guide, **Higher Education. Undergraduate students:** your rights under consumer law at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students)
- A short guide to students' consumer rights is also available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-a-short-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students>
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs)
- Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCRs)
- Part 1 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015
- The Provision of Services Regulations 2009 (PSRs)