

## Consumer Rights Policy

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author	Next Review
1	05/18	N/A	N/A	AM	12/18
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; removal of questions with no answers; addition of links to CMA guide; replacement of 'Vice-Principal' with Dean; Correction of typographical errors; Numbering of paragraphs.	Annual Review of Policy	JY	12/19

### Quality Code:

This policy has been mapped against Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision of the UK Quality Code. Extensive reference has been made to the 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)

### Policy Links

This policy is linked to the following Brit College policies and procedures:

- Student Protection Plan
- Student Fees and Refunds Policy
- Student Experience and Engagement Policy
- Procedure: Student Registrations and Confirmation of Attendance
- Admissions, Applications and Enrolment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

### Access:

All policies are available on the College website and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and referenced in the Student and Staff Handbooks. If required, hard copy or large format edition may be requested from Student Services.

### Review:

This policy is reviewed annually by the Dean and by Students, via their representatives on the Student Council and at the Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSC), by staff, via the Academic Management Team (AMT) and Academic Board (AB) meetings and then approved and ratified by the Board of Directors (BoD) and the College Oversight Board (COB).

**Communication:**

Students and staff are informed about College policies during induction and also receive periodic reminders during the academic year. Training on college policies and procedures is also part of student representative and staff development training.

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Students of 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. Policy**

2.1 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**

3.1 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**

4.1 Under consumer law students have rights regarding:

- Information provision – higher education providers need to provide clear, accurate, intelligible, unambiguous and timely information about your programme of study.
- Terms and conditions – higher education providers' terms and conditions that apply to students must be fair and balanced.
- Complaint handling processes and practices – higher education providers need to ensure their 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:

- Information provided prior to application
- Material information. 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 Course information**

Course information provided should include:

- The course title
- The entry requirements
- The core modules
- Information about 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) is regulated and by whom
- Whether the course is accredited, for example by a professional body
- Any other particular terms and conditions

## 5.2 Total 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

## 5.3 CMA Guide

For answers to questions about the provision of clear and accurate information, and your rights if it is inaccurate or unclear, see the **CMA 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)

## 6. Terms and conditions

6.1 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.

6.2 For definitions of fairness and details on how this applies to students see the **CMA 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)

## 7. Complaint handling processes and practices

7.1 The higher education provider's complaint handling procedures and practices need to be easy to locate, accessible, clear and fair to students.

7.2 The College provides full details of its complaints procedure in the Student Handbook, on its website and on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). For further details see also our Complaints Policy.

7.3 For more information on your rights regarding the accessibility and fairness of complaints procedures please see the **CMA 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)

## 8. What to do if you have a concern?

8.1 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)

8.2 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 the Complaints Policy).

8.3 For more information on what to do if you have a concern please see the **CMA Guide, Higher Education. Undergraduate students: your rights under consumer law** at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students)

## 9. Overview of consumer law

9.1 The key pieces of legislation that underpin consumer law and establish the obligations of the College to students are:

- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs)
- Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCRs)
- Unfair terms legislation
- Other relevant legislation

9.2 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>