

## Annex C: Template for producing a self-assessment on guidance on consumer protection law

Provider's name: British Institute of Technology Ltd (trading as British Institute of Technology, England (BITE))

Provider's UKPRN: 10000920

### Compliance with consumer protection law

The British Institute of Technology, England (BITE) recognises the importance of complying with the Consumer Protection Law (CPL) and takes its responsibility seriously at all stages of the student journey from application to completion. Our approach to contract management, governance and compliance procedures have considered necessary steps to ensure that we are compliant with CPL. We use our internal audit to monitor, identify and action to ensure compliance. We use the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance that sets out the consumer rights for a student. The guide covers three key consumer law issues for students:

- Information provision – higher education institutions need to provide up front, clear, intelligible, unambiguous and timely information.
- Terms and conditions – higher education institutions terms and conditions that apply to students need to be fair and balanced.
- Complaint handling processes and practices – higher education institutions need to ensure their complaint handling processes and practices are accessible, clear and fair to students.

We are compliant with consumer protection law, we think this because our product and services are developed in accordance to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance.

- Information about our institution
- Student charter
- Programme specification includes programme title, entry requirements, course duration, core modules, option modules and methods of assessment
- Course handbook includes course regulation
- Module descriptors
- Terms and conditions includes fee policy
- Application form includes learning agreement

The evidence that demonstrates this includes our internal audit, external annual monitoring audits by the validating university and the Quality Assurance Agency. Our internal policies and procedure also adheres and makes sure that we constantly review and enhance our commitment, the evidence that demonstrates this includes:

- programme committee
- learning and quality committee
- academic board
- we have a designated member of staff who is responsible for consumer protection law issues
- we take legal advice when developing new contracts and when we change terms and

conditions.

The Consumer protection law issues are discussed at:

- Staff Monthly Meeting
- Programme Committee
- Learning and Quality Committee
- Executive Committee
- Academic Board
- The Council
- Annual Review

To ensure that we will be fully compliant, we will review and we will have done this by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 including:

- *information on organisational and staffing arrangements, for example, whether there is a department and/or designated staff member responsible for consumer law issues*
- *information on working groups or committees established to tackle issues relating to consumer law such as information management and provision, complaints handling and the setting of terms and conditions and/or contracts*
- *information about staff training on your consumer law obligations*
- *details of reviews (planned or actual) into information management and provision, complaint handling and the setting of terms and conditions and/or contracts*
- *evidence that professional legal advice has been sought*
- *use of model contracts, terms and conditions*
- *policies relating to sources of information for staff and students, with examples of how this is provided*
- *policies and procedures relating to consumer law obligations, such as information management and provision, complaints handling and setting terms and conditions and/or contracts.*

**Our approach to providing information to applicants and students: research and application stage, offer stage and enrolment stage**

We publish a prospectus containing information on our website and also make this available in pdf and in print. We ensure this is accurate and clear by internally moderating this, by the publishing team leader and then by the academic registrar. We then request this to be externally approved by the validating university partner.

- <http://www.bite.ac.uk/>
- <http://www.bite.ac.uk/about/academic-registry/>
- information about the structure of the courses we offer and the relevant fees/costs;
- letters supporting offers to applicants
- details of reviews (planned or actual) into information management and provision
- policies relating to sources of information for staff and students, with examples of how this is provided
- policies and procedures relating to consumer law obligations, such as information management and provision.

We know when information is not accurate or clear because we constantly monitor, discuss the public information in our meeting and we take these steps to improve it:

- Review and update;
- We ensure this is accurate and clear by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

#### **Our contract terms and conditions include:**

Our application form forms the learning agreement with the student it references and includes:

- Application Form
- Student Terms and Conditions
- Student Charter
- Course Handbook
- Academic Appeals
- Complaint Policy

The contracts we use to govern relationships with students and how we ensure that these are fair and have transparent terms and conditions. Our terms and conditions, including rules and regulations, are made available to students through <http://www.bite.ac.uk/about/academic-registry/>

We ensure that terms and conditions and regulations are clear and understandable to students by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. Also including this at inductions and also invite student to see the head of administration should any information is not clear to them.

We take the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance to ensure the terms are fair and the following actions/steps review the terms and conditions at the learning and quality committee and the academic board.

#### **Our complaint handling processes and practices**

Our complaints policy and procedures are available at <http://www.bite.ac.uk/about/academic-registry/>

In the first instance students may approach the student welfare officer, the personal tutor this is explained at the induction. The stage one of the complaint process is to seek possible conciliation this is done at individual meeting with one of the following:

- student welfare officer
- the personal tutor
- the programme leader
- the dean or
- anyone at the institute the student feels comfortable with.

We review and monitor our complaints procedure using the good practice framework of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's (OIA).

In stage one discussion takes place to understand the complaint and seek conciliation, if the matter is resolved through conciliation then the matter is not recorded. Should the matter not be resolved at stage one then a formal complaint is submitted in accordance to the complaint procedure.

If the complaint is not resolved at the institute, the student can take the complaint to the validating university and follow the procedure of the validating university. Should the complaint continue to be unresolved the students can write to the Office of the Independent Adjudicators.

By continuously reviewing at our student welfare meetings, programme committee meeting, learning and quality committee meetings and the academic board. Sharing best practice from validating universities to make sure our complaints process is clear, accessible and fair.

We discuss the complaint process at our staff meeting to ensure staff are upto date and competent in the good practice framework of the OIA.