



# Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy

## Introduction

We are committed to conducting our business with honesty, integrity and accountability and we expect all colleagues to maintain high standards.

We recognise that there may be occasions when individuals have genuine concerns about an actual, potential or perceived risk, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct concerning the University. We also recognise that our colleagues represent a valuable source of information to identify potential problems and to ensure that they are dealt with before they damage the reputation of the University. The raising of such concerns can make a positive difference, alerting the University to serious risks or malpractice that might otherwise take time to come to light. Individuals who make a disclosure under the terms of this policy will be protected and supported.

### Table of Contents

- Introduction..... 1
- 1. Purpose..... 2
- 2. Scope ..... 2
- 3. What is Whistleblowing?..... 2
- 4. Raising a Whistleblowing Concern ..... 3
- 5. Investigation and Outcome ..... 4
- 6. Confidentiality ..... 5
- 7. External Disclosures ..... 5
- 8. Protection for those raising concerns ..... 6
- 9. Reporting of Outcomes ..... 6
- 10. Responsibility for the Success of this Policy ..... 6
- 11. Support and Useful Policies ..... 7
- Appendix 1 – Key Contacts..... 7
- Document detail ..... 7



## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide an open and transparent way to raise serious concerns that are in the public interest. The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage colleagues to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- To provide colleagues with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- To reassure colleagues that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

## 2. Scope


This policy applies to all colleagues engaged on any contract type, students, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, visitors and volunteers.

## 3. What is Whistleblowing?

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) provides legal protection for employees and workers who are dismissed or subjected to detriment by their employer as a result of raising certain serious concerns in the public interest. Such disclosures are known as “protected disclosures” and are commonly referred to as whistleblowing.

Whistleblowing means the raising of a concern or making a disclosure that is in the public interest i.e. it is a disclosure of serious wrongdoing that has an impact beyond the individual making the disclosure. This may include: -

- Criminal activity.

- 
- Miscarriages of justice.
  - Sexual harassment.
  - Danger to health and safety.
  - Damage to the environment.
  - Failure to comply with any legal [or professional] obligation or regulatory requirements or the Constitution of the University.
  - Bribery.
  - Financial fraud or mismanagement.
  - Non-financial malpractice or maladministration.
  - Negligence.
  - Breach of our internal policies and procedures [including our Code of Conduct].
  - Conduct likely to damage our reputation.
  - Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.
  - Academic or professional malpractice, including the obstruction of the exercise of genuine academic freedom and the theft of intellectual property.
  - The deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above matters.

A whistleblower is an individual who raises a concern in good faith relating to any of the matters outlined above. Where an individual has a concern about suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern), they should report it in accordance with this policy.

Where concerns are solely of a personal nature, they should be raised under other relevant procedures such as the Resolution Procedure or Dignity at Work Policy as appropriate.

Although workplace concerns would normally be raised with managers, it is recognised that the seriousness of some issues may require disclosure under this procedure.

If an individual is uncertain whether a concern is within the scope of this policy, they should seek advice from the Whistleblowing Officer (Secretary to Court).

#### 4. Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

Normally concerns should be raised in the first instance with the People Manager or Dean/Director. However, it is recognised that because of the seriousness or sensitivity of some issues this may not be possible.



In these cases, individuals should contact the Whistleblowing Officer (Secretary to Court).

The Whistleblowing Officer (Secretary to Court) will immediately inform the Principal and Vice Chancellor and the Chairman of the University Court unless: -

- requested not to do so; or
- if the Chairman of the Court is likely to be involved in any subsequent appeal

Where there are concerns about the misuse of public funds, the Whistleblowing Officer (Secretary to Court) should also inform the Scottish Funding Council and the Chairman of the University's Audit Committee at an early stage.

If the disclosure is about the Secretary to Court, the disclosure should be made directly to the Principal and Vice Chancellor.

Disclosures should be made in writing, clearly outlining that this is being done within the terms of this policy. The disclosure should include the nature of the concern and why it is believed to show malpractice and that the disclosure is in the public interest. The background and all relevant evidence should be included.

Following receipt of the disclosure, a meeting will be arranged with the individual to discuss their concern. The individual may be accompanied at the meeting.


A summary note of the meeting will be taken and provided to the individual following the meeting. The individual will also be given an indication of how the matter will be progressed.

## 5. Investigation and Outcome

Following the disclosure, an initial assessment will be conducted to determine the scope of any investigation. The individual will be informed of the outcome of the initial assessment. The individual may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information.

In some cases, an investigator or team of investigators may be appointed. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

The individual will be informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the individual being provided with specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. The individual should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.



If we conclude that a whistleblower has made a malicious complaint, then whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

There is no formal right to appeal under this procedure. If an individual is not satisfied in the way their concern has been handled, they can raise it with one of the other key contacts detailed in Appendix A.

## 6. Confidentiality

We hope that individuals will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy and the University encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. However, if an individual wishes to raise a concern in confidence, we will make every effort to protect their identity. Where it is necessary for those investigating the concern to know who raised it, this will be discussed with the individual beforehand.

Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered, if possible, but it is likely to be more difficult if full information is not provided.


Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Whistleblowing Officer (Secretary to Court) and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality.

## 7. External Disclosures

We recommend that concerns are raised internally in the first instance. This policy and the protection it provides are intended to support individuals to do so.

There may be occasions where individuals feel they need to report matters outside the University. To retain whistleblowing legal rights, these disclosures should be made to a prescribed regulator. We strongly encourage individuals to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, provides advice and a confidential helpline.

Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a customer, supplier or service provider. The law allows colleagues to raise a concern in good faith with a third party, where they reasonably believe it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility. However,



we encourage colleagues to report such concerns internally first. The colleague should contact their people manager or the Secretary to Court.

## 8. Protection for those raising concerns

Colleagues who disclose concerns under this procedure must be supported and taken seriously. They must not suffer any detriment provided the disclosure is made:

- In accordance with these procedures
- In the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice and that disclosure is in the public interest

Detriment might include disciplinary action, termination of employment or unfair treatment. Anyone making a disclosure can seek advice from the People Team of the Whistleblowing Officer (Secretary to Court) if they have concerns.

All complaints about victimisation because of concerns raised in line with this policy will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action for the individual involved.

## 9. Reporting of Outcomes

A report of all disclosures and any subsequent actions taken will be made by the Secretary to Court who will retain such reports for a specified period of time (e.g. three years). In all cases a report of the outcomes of any investigation will be made to the Audit Committee in detail where the issues fall within its purview, and in summary in other cases, as means of allowing the Committee to monitor the effectiveness of the procedure. In cases involving the misuse of public funds, the outcome will be reported to the Scottish Funding Council.

## 10. Responsibility for the Success of this Policy

The University Court has overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

The Whistleblowing Officer has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy and must ensure that all managers and other colleagues who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.

All colleagues are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.

## 11. Support and Useful Policies

- Employee Assistance Programme
- Resolution Policy & Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy

### Appendix 1 – Key Contacts

<b>Whistleblowing Officer - Secretary to Court</b>	Michael Greenhalgh Telephone - 0131 455 3209 Email – <a href="mailto:m.greenhalgh@napier.ac.uk">m.greenhalgh@napier.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal</b>	<b>Professor Sue Rigby</b> Telephone – 0131 455 6400 Email – <a href="mailto:s.rigby@napier.ac.uk">s.rigby@napier.ac.uk</a>
<b>Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)</b>	Helpline: 020 3117 2520 Website: <a href="#">Protect - Speak up stop harm - Whistleblowing Homepage</a>

### Document detail

Document Name	Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy
Author/Owner	People Team
Date of Next Review	May 2028
Date of Last Review	May 2026