

GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	April 2020	
School or Executive Group Area:	Registrar and Secretary	
Department:	Corporate Governance Office	
Lead member of staff: e-mail:	Edna Docherty, Senior Policy Officer H.Docherty@gsa.ac.uk	
Area of decision making/title of policy, procedure, programme or relevant practice:	Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing) Policy	
Please indicate if this is:	New:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Existing/Reviewed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>1. Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):</p> <p>The policy is available to employees and all individuals within the GSA community¹ who wish to disclose concerns about dangerous, fraudulent, illegal or unethical conduct, malpractice or impropriety at or by the GSA. It provides a process to support the investigation of any matters raised, in a fair, expedient and discreet manner.</p> <p>It has recently been reviewed as part of the ongoing departmental review schedule to ensure that the Corporate Governance Office continues to maintain a suite of documentation that underpins the Statement of Corporate Governance and ensures GSA's alignment with the Scottish Code of Good Governance and with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, and complies with the Public Sector Equality Duties and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was completed in August 2017 when the Policy was first implemented.</p> <p>A further EIA has been undertaken in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the purpose of the revised policy is clearly defined and its application reflects current legislative and employer responsibilities. • Ensure that GSA continues to protect any employee (and individuals within the GSA community) that raise a concern under the revised policy from disadvantage, detriment and/or unfair dismissal in compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. • Safeguard those against whom allegations have been made. • Identify any changes to both the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 in order to ensure continued compliance. <p>The nature of this revised policy is that it must apply equally and fairly to everyone within the GSA community, and provide a framework to handle concerns relevant to the policy in a clear and consistent manner.</p> <p>The PSED has been considered as an integral aspect of the policy review process.</p>		

¹ This includes former employees, students, members of the Board of Governors

2. Evidence used to make your assessment:

- There have been no recorded complaints relating to whistleblowing since the original Policy was implemented in 2017.
- A recent Benchmarking Exercise revealed that the GSA Policy is in line with the sector, where there is no evidence of PSED related issues arising relative to this policy approach.
- Consultation with reference to the PSED was undertaken with Union Representatives. Senior Management, Audit Committee and Head of Human Resources in the review of the policy.

Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

The potential for **positive impact** in respect of the three duties of the Equality Act 2010 has been identified as follows:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act:

- The policy signposts staff and students to other relevant policies and contains a clear commitment to prevent victimisation and harassment as a result of raising a concern under the policy.
- It also signposts staff and students to Protect², an Independent Whistleblowing Charity which provides expert advice and operates a confidential helpline as well as a list of external bodies that an individual can raise concerns with in exceptional circumstances.
- The policy offers a mechanism through which a potential concern related to individuals or institutional discriminatory practice could be raised in the public interest.

2. Advance Equality of Opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it:

- The purpose of the policy is to support and promote a culture of openness and accountability in which employees, students and Board members are able to raise genuine concerns about malpractice or serious risk, as early as possible, prevent such situations occurring and ensure a process is in place to address such issues.
- The policy further offers an opportunity for disclosures to be made to three extra Designated Officer.

3. Foster Good Relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- The policy recognises the difficulty staff may face in voicing concerns and assures staff, students and Board Members that they will be supported and confidentiality respected.

No actual or potential **negative impact** on people from any protected characteristic group has been identified in relation to the application of the policy or its implementation.

² <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

4. Actions you have taken or planned as a result of your findings:

Action	Equality Impact	Person responsible	Time frame
Monitoring and reporting Implement robust monitoring mechanisms of the application of this policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To include data on the number and nature of concerns raised informally and formally, how they were addressed and the outcomes. 	Inform delivery of the three needs of PSED through identification of issues or themes arising and their relevance to the PSED.	Assistant Secretary to the Board	Semester 1 2020/21

5. Where/when will progress and the outcomes of your actions be reported and reviewed:

The Registrar and Secretary will report annually to the Audit Committee which will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the procedure.

6. How will your actions and intended outcomes contribute to the delivery of GSA's equality outcomes:

The implementation of appropriate monitoring and reporting of all concerns raised will provide data on the organisational culture of GSA and where relevant will be available to inform the delivery of the PSED and GSA's Equality Outcomes.

The outcome of your assessment

- No action (no potential for negative or positive impact)
- Action to remove barriers/mitigate negative impact
- Action to promote positive impact

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing**Review Lead**

Signed	Edna Docherty
Position	Senior Policy Officer
Date	23 April 2020

Executive Lead

Signed	Craig Williamson
Position	Registrar and Secretary
Date	23 April 2020

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Signed	Jill Hammond
Date	12 June 2020