



**CITY UNIVERSITY
LONDON**

Department of Radiography

Whistle blowing policy for students and link lecturers

Policy: This policy outlines for students and link lecturers the procedure to be followed when a student observes a practitioner whose conduct is deemed sufficiently unprofessional to warrant reporting to a senior member of staff either of the clinical placement or to the Department of Radiography.

Purpose: To protect patients and/or students within the placement and to support students and placement staff by providing a clear strategy of action.

Scope: All students of the department while on placement.

Introduction

This policy has been designed to support students who consider a clinical practitioner's conduct to be either sufficiently unprofessional or unsafe as to warrant notification to a more senior member of staff (either in the Department of Radiography or in the practice experience). The observed practice may necessitate either the student(s) or the practitioner being removed from practice as a precaution whilst a full investigation is carried out.

It has been developed:

- In the interest of the patient/client group
- In the interest of the educational development of the student(s)
- To enable suitable action to be achieved with minimum disruption to the patients, the student and staff
- To ensure appropriate individuals are notified of the concerns.

1. Notification and recording of observed incident

- The student should make factual notes as soon as possible after observing the incident. These should provide a record of the observed conduct, and include essential information: date, time and location of the event, who was involved, the conduct observed, whether there were any witnesses to the incident.

- The student should notify a suitable member of staff (link lecturer or clinical co-ordinator) immediately and preferable within 24 hours of the incident. In the preliminary stages it is important that the student is able to discuss the observed conduct so that a judgement can be made as to whether the observed conduct constitutes a breach in professional behaviour.
- The student should be asked whether s/he wishes to continue with a formal complaint and is provided with information about the procedure, is counselled about the possible consequences and advised to obtain professional support from a personal tutor (if not already involved) and a union representative.
- The staff member should make a record of this conversation and notify a relevant senior member of staff. This could be the Programme Director or Placement Manager within the clinical setting. The staff members should make recommendations for immediate further action required, which must include notifying the related senior person (either in the Department of in the placement site).
- The student is offered pastoral support and this may include a recommendation to contact their professional union for further advice and support.

2. Managing the incident with the student

- Normally within seven (7) days and following the informal meeting with the staff member the student then writes a formal statement of the observed events and signs it. This is given to the Programme Director and to the Placement Manager or an appropriate member of clinical staff by the person providing support to the student (personal tutor/link lecturer).
- A decision is made as to whether the student(s) need to change practice settings, and whether it should be withdrawn from the programme circuit pending further investigation.
- The outcome of the investigation is communicated to the Clinical Co-ordinator and Programme Director and a decision is made whether to continue offering the practice setting to students.
- Students who bring a formal complaint may subsequently be asked to provide their evidence as a witness at any inquiry, investigation, disciplinary hearing or legal investigation.

N.B. Students are strongly recommended to join a union or professional organisation at the earliest stage in their programme so that they can receive impartial legal advice and support.

Process for notifying appropriate persons of concerns

Notifying the observed incident

- I. In the first instance the student should document their observations in a logical and precise order as soon as possible after the incident.

- II. The student should then discuss the matter with the most appropriate person available and a decision is made as to whether the matter needs to be investigated further or whether the student requires explanation and support. The following are examples of who the student could contact for advice:
 - The student's personal tutor
 - The placement manager
 - Link Lecturer
 - Clinical Co-ordinator
 - Programme Director
 - Any other appropriate person
- III. If it is agreed that the incident does not warrant further investigation the observer should be counselled as to the possible consequences of their observations and provided with pastoral support.
- IV. The Clinical Co-ordinator in consultation with the link lecturer should meet with the student who is bringing the complaining to assess the situation and decide on a plan of action, which may mean transferring the student(s) to a different clinical placement.
- V. The normal policy for dealing with such incidents is carried out by the relevant NHS trust and the department is notified of the outcome.
- VI. A detailed written statement of the incident will be made by the investigating officer and passed to the programme director.
- VII. A copy of this statement will be sent to the student (and the student's personal tutor)