

William College – Consumer Protection and Compliance Statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the policies and procedures of our partner university. As a franchised provider, we adhere fully to our partner institution's requirements while ensuring that all our practices and communications comply strictly with CMA standards. This dual commitment guarantees that our applicants and students remain informed and protected, reinforcing our dedication to consumer rights and high-quality academic provision.

William College is committed to fairness, transparency, and integrity in all student interactions. In compliance with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance on consumer protection law and registration requirements with the Office for Students (OfS), we ensure that students receive clear, accurate, and reliable information about their programmes, fees, terms, and academic experience.

This statement outlines how William College aligns with CMA expectations regarding student rights and consumer protection, covering programme information, terms and conditions, complaints handling, and programme changes.

1. Compliance with Consumer Protection Legislation

Higher education represents a significant financial commitment, and students have rights under consumer protection law. The CMA guidance (updated May 2023) provides the minimum requirements for compliance, ensuring students are well-informed and treated fairly throughout their educational journey.

As part of the OfS conditions of registration, William College must comply with consumer protection law. For more details, refer to the CMA Consumer Law Advice for Higher Education Providers [here](#).

2. Provision of clear and accurate Programme information

The CMA requires higher education providers to provide clear, accurate, and up-to-date information to students at every stage of their journey—from the research and application stage through to enrolment and study.

Material Information

William College ensures that all prospective and current students can access and receive the "*material information*" necessary for making informed decisions at application and offer stages, including:

- Award and Qualification: The nature of the degree, diploma or certification conferred.
- Programme Location: Clear information about where teaching will take place, including any blended or online components.
- Programme duration: Full-time and part-time study options with anticipated completion timelines.
- Core modules and options: Identifying compulsory and optional elements of the programme.
- Assessment methods: The overall approach to coursework, exams, and practical assessments.
- Learning and Teaching methods: The mode of delivery (e.g., face-to-face, online, or blended), expected contact hours, and independent study expectations.

- Accreditation (if applicable): Clear identification of any professional recognition or licensing requirements.
- Fees and additional costs: Transparency on tuition fees, additional expenses (e.g., materials, field trips), and any extra charges students might incur.

This information is collected and reviewed as part of the programme approval process. Any amendments or modifications to programmes are initiated by the Partner University and communicated promptly to applicants and students by William College. All contractual information is published online ensuring compliance with CMA expectations on information provision ([CMA Guidance, Section 4](#)).

Programme information: Delivery and Accessibility

William College provides programme information in an accessible format, ensuring students receive a programme specification at the point of offer and again at enrolment. Any substantive changes require consultation with affected students via partner university quality assurance mechanisms and student consultation arrangements.

All verbal and written communications about programmes must align with approved information. Anyone involved in marketing, student recruitment, or advising applicants is responsible for ensuring compliance with CMA guidance.

3. Fair and Transparent Terms and Conditions

Our Terms and Conditions set out the basis on which students accept an offer of study. To align with CMA and OfS expectations, our terms:

- Are easily accessible in a clear and readable format.
- Do not unfairly limit liability, even in cases of industrial action or public health emergencies.
- Ensure fees and costs are transparent, with no hidden charges.
- Provide clear guidelines on intellectual property rights.
- Make rules and regulations easily available to students.
- Highlight any unusual terms that might impact student decision-making.

The CMA requires that any significant changes to terms and conditions after a student enrolls must be reasonable and communicated clearly ([CMA Guidance, Section 5](#)).

4. Transparent Admissions and Offer Process

Our admissions process is equitable, transparent, and structured, ensuring:

- Clarity in selection criteria and entry requirements
- A fair and non-discriminatory approach to admissions, with admissions officers receiving training on unconscious bias, consumer rights, and diversity to ensure fair and consistent decision-making.
- Applicants receive timely updates on the status of their applications.
- Conditional and unconditional offers are clearly explained, detailing obligations and student rights, including the right to appeal decisions or raise concerns if they believe an error has been made in their application assessment.

This aligns with CMA consumer law guidance on admissions practices ([CMA Guidance, Section 4](#)).

5. Student Protection and Programme Continuity

William College is currently developing its own Student Protection Plan (SPP) as part of our commitment to Office for Students registration. However, as our programmes are delivered through franchise arrangements, we continue to adhere to the Student Protection Plan of our Partner University. This arrangement ensures that students remain fully protected in the event of programme changes, closures, or unexpected disruptions, providing them with a consistent and dependable framework throughout their studies.

Key safeguards in the Student Protection Plan:

- Programme closure or withdrawal: Students receive early notification, guidance on alternative study options, and transfer support.
- Changes to programme content: Substantive changes require consultation and, where necessary, student consent.
- Institutional changes affecting programme delivery: William College commits to continuity of support, learning resources, and academic guidance.
- Financial stability and institutional risk management: Proactive monitoring ensures financial sustainability to minimise risks to students.
- Complaints and Appeals: A transparent process allowing students to challenge any decisions affecting their studies.

This aligns with OfS regulatory requirements on student protection ([OfS Condition C3](#)).

6. Handling of Complaints and Appeals

William College ensures that all students have access to a clear, accessible, and impartial complaints and appeals procedure. Students can find full details of the Complaints and Appeals Policy on the college website or by contacting the Student Support Team directly.

Our approach guarantees:

- Transparency: All policies are publicly available.
- Impartiality: Complaints and appeals are handled fairly and without bias.
- Timeliness: Issues are addressed promptly to minimise disruption.

William College conducts an annual review of its Complaints Policy, placing significant emphasis on safeguarding students' consumer rights.

This aligns with CMA requirements for fair complaint handling ([CMA Guidance, Section 6](#)).

7. Commitment to academic quality and student experience

William College is committed to delivering high-quality education and works collaboratively with partner universities to:

- Conduct regular curriculum reviews to ensure alignment with industry needs and academic standards.
- Implement fair and transparent assessment methods to maintain consistency and uphold academic integrity.
- Provide comprehensive student support services, including career guidance, academic mentoring, and mental health resources.

These measures align with OfS standards for academic quality and student experience ([OfS Regulatory Framework, Conditions B1-B4](#)).

8. Compliance and Training for Staff

All staff involved in student recruitment, admissions, programme delivery, and student support receive mandatory training on CMA compliance to ensure:

- Clear communication of course and fee information.
- Adherence to fair admissions and student contract policies.
- Proper handling of complaints and appeals under consumer law requirements.

Annual refresher training ensures ongoing compliance, and new staff receive CMA training as part of induction.

9. Programme approvals and changes

To ensure compliance with CMA expectations, we work closely with our Partner Universities and strictly adhere to agreed deadlines for programme approvals and modifications.

- New courses and changes must be finalised before student applications open.
- Late changes require consultation and may require student consent.
- Marketing materials and online prospectuses are automatically updated when course details change.

Failure to provide clear and consistent course information could breach consumer protection law. At the same time, providing excessive information that cannot be guaranteed may also mislead students.

The CMA recognises that universities must update programmes to remain relevant, but any changes must be reasonable, justified, and clearly communicated ([CMA Guidance, Section 4](#)).

10. Review and Continuous Improvement of This Statement

This Consumer Protection and Compliance Statement is reviewed annually to ensure it reflects:

- Updates in CMA and OfS regulatory requirements.
- Institutional policy changes and student feedback.
- Sector-wide best practices.

Senior academic and governance teams oversee this review to ensure compliance and continuous improvement.

William College is committed to delivering a fair, transparent, and good-quality educational experience, ensuring compliance with CMA and OfS consumer protection regulations. More details can be found here:

- CMA Higher Education Consumer Protection Guidance [here](#).
- OfS Student Protection Plan Requirements [here](#).
- Complaints Policy
- Appeals Policy