



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Document control

Audience	Internal colleagues, External colleagues, Customers
Application	This policy applies to all Achieve+Partners personnel and bodies that work with it
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Responsibility	The Operations Director is responsible for the implementation of the policy and maintenance of all controlled documents

Document change record

Changes to specific sections of the document are listed below:

Page	Section	Change
All		Updated to incorporate internal employees



SECTION 1: POLICY

Introduction

We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all employees to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible. Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities.

This policy also details Achieve+Partners' commitment to the provision of duty of care to learners and those that work with learners including customers, training providers and employers. Achieve+Partners have a positive commitment and open approach to whistleblowing.

This policy is designed for any individual who wishes to make a disclosure(s) relating for example to wrongdoing concerns, discrepancies, malpractice or maladministration in:

- + the development, delivery and award of end-point assessments and qualifications
- + assessment arrangements on end-point assessments and qualifications
- + conduct of assessments of end-point assessments and qualifications
- + other matters likely to be of relevance to Achieve+Partners in its role as an awarding organisation.
- + bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment, sexual harassment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

Purpose

This policy sets out the conditions and arrangements that an individual must follow, to raise a whistleblowing concern. The policy also sets out the steps Achieve+Partners will take to respond, investigate and report the outcomes of an investigation into allegations and concerns.

Definitions

Whistleblowing is a term used when an individual raises a genuine concern about suspected wrongdoing, concerns, malpractice or maladministration and/or the covering up of wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration that they become aware of through their work. The wrongdoing, concern, malpractice or maladministration often affects others, for example customers or members of the public.



For the purposes of this policy Achieve+Partners defines malpractice and maladministration in accordance with the General Conditions of Recognition:

- + Malpractice is defined as any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or the validity of certificates – it also covers misconduct
- + Maladministration is any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with regulations, including cases of persistent mistakes or poor administration regarding end-point assessment provision.

Whistleblowing is distinct from both complaints and employment disputes or grievances that an individual may have. A complaint can be defined as an expression of personal dissatisfaction. Examples of complaints that we will normally investigate can be found in our Complaints Policy for conducting enquiries into complaints about our services.

Arrangements

Whistleblowing disclosures can be made by providing as much detailed information as possible and sent to Achieve+Partners at:

Whistleblowing Officer	Derek Williams 07710 682 631 derek@achievepartners.co.uk
By post	50 Holdings Road Sheffield S2 2RE
Directors	Lisa Williamson, lisa@achievepartners.co.uk Amanda Moore, amanda@achievepartners.co.uk
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: 0203 117 2520 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk

Examples of whistleblowing disclosures to Achieve+Partners may include:

- + A worker making a disclosure about wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration they suspect in the provision of assessment services
- + A learner making a disclosure about wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration in the provision of qualification and assessment services they or others have received



- + A parent or employer making a disclosure about wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration in the provision of qualification and assessment services they or others witnessed, heard about or suspected bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment, sexual harassment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

Making a disclosure

Making a disclosure to Achieve+Partners will be in absolute confidence. Achieve+Partners have experienced staff to deal effectively with disclosures and will acknowledge receipt of a disclosure, including when to expect a response. Every effort will be made to respond to disclosures quickly and efficiently in accordance with the timelines listed below, where contact details have been provided. However, these may be subject to change where the situation may be complex. When this occurs Achieve+Partners will advise of the reason(s) why and the new timescale.

Acknowledgment:	Within 3 working days after receipt of the disclosure
Written outcome:	Within 28 working days from the date of the acknowledgement

Investigating disclosures

Achieve+Partners will conduct a full investigation of any disclosure (for further details please see our complaints policy). We will also investigate anonymous whistleblowing disclosures however it may not always be possible to investigate or substantiate anonymous disclosures.

If you disclose your identity, it will be easier for us to:

- + look into the matter
- + protect your position
- + give you feedback where appropriate.

It is hoped that the assurances given in this policy will encourage individuals to disclose their identity to those who need to know. However, if an individual prefers to raise an issue anonymously, we will of course, consider the disclosure in accordance with this policy.

Each disclosure of information is considered sensitively and carefully, and an appropriate response and course of action will be constructed. We may share with third parties any information received in the



disclosure where we consider it necessary to do so. In most cases, we will keep individuals updated as to what action is being taken in response to their disclosure. We will normally send you an update within 28 working days of receiving your disclosure, but this may take longer if the issue is particularly complex.

We may not always treat an allegation as a whistleblowing disclosure as it may be more appropriate to treat the disclosure as a complaint. There may also be occasions where it is not appropriate for us to investigate under certain circumstances. In this case we may recommend another course of action for an individual to take.

At the end of an investigation, if an individual is unhappy with the conclusion, they can write to the relevant regulators, explaining the dissatisfaction with the outcome and they may be able to investigate your concerns further.

Confidentiality

Achieve+Partners will always endeavour to keep a whistleblower's identity confidential when asked to do so, although we cannot guarantee this, and we may need to disclose an identity to:

- + the police, fraud prevention agencies or other law enforcement agencies (to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud)
- + the courts (in connection with court proceedings)
- + another person or organisation to whom we are required by law to disclose your identity.

A whistleblower should also recognise that he or she may be identifiable by others due to the nature or circumstances of the disclosure.

Protection and support for whistleblowers

We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing Officer or a Director immediately.



You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases, the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

However, if we conclude that an internal whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

Protect operates a confidential helpline.

Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: 0203 117 2520 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk
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After the investigation

The Quality Director will ensure, to the appropriate extent, that the findings of the investigation are communicated to:

- + the whistleblower, as the person raising the concern, where identity has been disclosed
- + the individual(s) under investigation and if appropriate, other external authorities who may need to consider whether action should be taken because of the findings.



SECTION 2: PROCEDURE

This section of the policy sets out the procedural steps for processing disclosures and investigations

Ref	Step	Owner	CCP
1	Applicant completes the whistleblowing form providing any supporting evidence as required.	Applicant	
2	Achieve+Partners acknowledges receipt of whistleblowing form within 3 working days of receipt.	Operations Director	
3	Operations Director reviews the whistleblowing to ensure that all necessary information has been provided.	Operations Director	
4	Operations Director contacts the individual submitting the whistleblowing to request further information if required.	Operations Director	
5	Quality Director review the whistleblowing and carries out any necessary investigations. This may involve further contact with the applicant submitting the whistleblowing form.	Quality Director	X
6	The Quality Director will agree with the Achieve+Partners Senior Management Team the appropriate response and associated actions.	Quality Director	
7	Quality Director will send Achieve+Partners response within 28 working days of the acknowledgement of receipt to the individual; this may involve a phone call to run through the detail of findings.	Quality Director	X
9	Agreed actions or improvement will be added to the Achieve+Partners Quality Improvement Plan and implemented according to its business priority.	Quality Director	
9	The Quality Director will carry out any further notifications to external quality assurance organisations, regulators, customers or apprentices as required.	Quality Director	
10	Should the applicant remain dissatisfied they can contact the regulator	Applicant	