

Consumer Protection Law Self-Assessment
RNN Group
UKPRN: 10005534

Overall Approach

A part of our application to the Office for Students, RNN Group conducted a self-assessment of our college's adherence to consumer protection law. Through the assessment process, RNN Group has identified that we are compliant with consumer protection law.

RNN Group has a member of staff who is responsible for consumer protection law issues and compliance within the college. The Director of Higher Education & Skills (DHES) utilises the support of our Data Protection Officer, Director of Quality, Head of Marketing, HE Co-ordinator and RNN Group's awarding bodies to develop and revise policies and procedures related to consumer protection law.

Consumer protection law issues are discussed at the HE Strategy and Quality Group meetings, chaired by the DHES. The application to the Office for Students has triggered RNN Group's first review of our internal policies and processes related to consumer protection law. This review will now be conducted annually, with any action plans monitored through the HE Strategy and Quality Group.

In addition to the above, RNN Group takes legal advice when developing new contracts and when we change our terms and conditions.

Responsibilities

Lead: the Director of Higher Education & Skills (DHES) has overall responsibility for consumer protection law compliance at RNN Group

Data Protection: the Data Protection Officer oversees compliance in relation to the protection of data held by RNN Group of our current and potential learners

Information: the DHES and the Director of Quality (DQ) oversee the policies that are written that relate to our current and potential learners. The DHES oversees HE communications and policies and the DQ oversees FE communications and policies. When any documents relate to both HE and FE learners, there is a single document that is reviewed by both the DHES and DQ for approval. The Head of Marketing oversees the development of the prospectus and RNN Group's marketing materials, with support by the DHES and curriculum staff.

Terms and Conditions: the DHES and the Director of Quality (DQ) oversee the Terms and Conditions that are written that relate to our current and potential learners. The DHES oversees HE Terms and Conditions and the DQ oversees Terms and Conditions. When any documents relate to both HE and FE learners, there is a single document that is reviewed by both the DHES and DQ for approval.

Complaint Processes: the Higher Education Co-ordinator oversees the policies related to complaints processes within RNN Group for Higher Education learners. RNN Group has three awarding bodies and their individual complaints processes

supersede RNN Group's complaints processes. As such, the HE Co-ordinator ensures which complaints processes are activated for each individual learner who may make a formal complaint. A single Complaints Policy for both FE and HE learners has been developed that directs each type of learner to an external, independent body if he/she so chooses to contact an external body for their potential grievance.

Training Needs

To support staff in understanding Consumer Protection Law, RNN Group utilised the training resources made available by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions. The free toolkit of PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and policies have been instrumental in informing those responsible for consumer law of the requirements of remaining compliant. To ensure RNN Group's Governance are aware of Consumer Protection Law, a presentation will be given in a board meeting during summer 2018.

Working Groups

Consumer Protection Law issues that are identified are reported to the Director of Higher Education & Skills (DHES) and are then brought to the HE Strategy and Quality Group for review. Recommendations are identified at the group meeting and are then presented to the Senior Leadership Team for approval. This process has not been enacted, but is clearly identified as the appropriate method of addressing issues and developing a response and subsequent action plan, where necessary.

Reviews

All policies and procedures within RNN Group are reviewed on an annual basis, tracked by the Quality Co-ordinator within the Quality Department. A tracking sheet of all policies has been created, with different points throughout the year that identifies when specific policies must be reviewed and updated by. As such, all policies related to information management and provision, complaint handling, and terms and conditions are reviewed and monitored for updating through a central body within RNN Group. All policies are available on our internal Portal system for staff and learners to easily access.

Location of Policies

- The HE Terms and Conditions for learners can be found [here](#)
- The Student Code of Conduct for all RNN Group learners can be found [here](#)
- The Complaints Policy for all RNN Group learners is known as the 'Compliments and Complaints Guidance' and can be found [here](#)
- The Academic Complaints Policy for HE learners can be found [here](#)

Information to Learners and Applicants

RNN Group ensures that applicants and current learners provided with accurate information about their course, fees and other relevant costs and about our institution, and that such information is accurate, clear, timely and accessible.

RNN Group publishes a prospectus every academic year. The annual prospectus is published around May each year in order to provide the most up-to-date information to current and potential

learners. The prospectus is available online [here](#), and a printed copy is provided at all Open Events, local school visits, and at the main receptions of all of RNN Group campuses. The prospectus contains information on:

- i. the courses we offer from Levels 4-7
- ii. the fees for each course on offer
- iii. the duration of study for each course on offer
- iv. the campus(s) each course on offer is taught from
- v. the entry criteria for each course on offer
- vi. an overview of each course on offer
- vii. the career opportunities following the course on offer
- viii. the validating partner associated with each course on offer
- ix. the different campuses we have within RNN Group
- x. funding and support available to potential and current learners
- xi. how to apply to each course on offer
- xii. the student support services available to all learners, including but not limited to:
 - a. financial support
 - b. career guidance
 - c. additional learning support
 - d. sexual health advice
 - e. disability support and advice
 - f. student activities and enrichment information

We also provide information on a number of areas related to Higher Education and are readily available on all college websites. The following documents can all be found [here](#)

- A. The College Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document (SED) is a quality assurance report written annually, reviewing the quality processes, student feedback, external examiner feedback, examination marks, and success and achievement rates of all Higher Education learners. The report is reviewed at the Senior Leadership Team and is approved by RNN Group's Governing Body before submission to HEFCE and published on our websites.
- B. A subsequent Higher Education Review Action Plan that follows the recommendations for improvements from the SED document is developed. The plan is monitored at the HE Strategy and Quality Group meeting and is published on all college websites.
- C. The Higher Education Strategy plan oversees the direction of Higher Education within RNN Group and is reviewed annually to identify if RNN Group is staying in line with the planned strategy document.
- D. To ensure that HE learners are involved in the different structural levels of RNN Group, in relation to feedback and decision making, a HE Student Involvement Strategy document has been devised that states how learners are encouraged to be a part of the HE Department, from module feedback to HE student presentation in the Strategy and Quality Group.
- E. For transparency for our current and potential learners, RNN Group has published the most recent QAA review visit for each campus. QAA has visited each campus (Rotherham College, North Notts College, and Dearne Valley College) and a subsequent QAA report is available for each campus.

- F. The Data Protection Policy we hold is easily accessible for all current and potential learners to read.
- G. RNN Group has a current OFFA Access Agreement and is published on our website for all current and potential learners to read.
- H. To support current and potential learners in understanding their rights, RNN Group shares a hyperlink to the 'Undergraduate students: your rights under consumer law' policy document written by Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) for transparency of rights. The document can be located [here](#)

Terms and Conditions

RNN Group has a Terms and Conditions document that relates to Higher Education level students. The document sets out the expectations of the learners at RNN Group and the policies that relate to a learner's educational life at RNN Group. The document is available on all college websites and can be found [here](#)

Complaint Processes

RNN Group strives to resolve quickly and informally concerns that may arise from learners. The Compliments and Complaints Guidance document for all RNN Group learners can be found [here](#)

A learner may submit a 'Compliments and Complaints' form at any main campus reception. The form is available at all campus receptions.

Learners may also submit a complaint to the Quality Department:

- Email: complaints@RNNGroup.co.uk
- Telephone: 01709513333 extension 1112 or 01709722793

Once a complaint has been received by a member of staff, the Quality Co-ordinator will:

- acknowledge it in writing within 2 working days (if not resolved within this time period)
- forward it to an investigating officer or relevant manager for investigation
- ensure that you receive a response within 10 working days of receipt of your complaint. Where this is not possible, especially if the complaint is complex or during student holiday periods, we will let you know and keep you informed of progress.

An appeal to the decision may be submitted by the learner within 10 working days of the response date. The appeal will be referred to the Deputy Principal and acknowledged within 2 working days. The learner will receive a formal response within 10 working days, or longer depending on the circumstances.

If the learner is not happy with the response to the complaint, learners are directed to contact an appropriate external body, with a recommendation of submitting a further complaint to the external body within 3 months.

- i. FE complaints are referred to The Complaints Adjudicator, Education & Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT
complaintsteam@sfa.bis.gov.uk

- ii. HE complaints are referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE). <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx>
- iii. Consumer Credit Service disputes are made to the Financial Ombudsman. The investigation can take up to 8 weeks. Refer to the Director of Finance for further information. <http://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/consumer/complaints.htm>
- iv. Complaints relating to Freedom of Information requests are made to the Information Commissioner <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>