

Student Handbook



This Student Handbook does not contain any course specific information, which is available in the relevant Programme Specifications and Unit Handbooks.

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Welcome

This handbook was prepared by students for students. I feel honoured to be asked to welcome you on behalf of the students that prepared this handbook, whilst extending my gratitude to them and to Rachel and Mabel who worked with them for a job well done. By joining Brit College you have become part of a vibrant learning community with a view not only to pursue an academic course, but to enrich the experience of each member.

I would like to emphasise the key themes, which provide the general principles that guide everything we do in Brit College. There are four of them:

Widening Participation Theme

You may have noticed that Brit College represents a diversity of people by any attribute. This is not a mistake. We are guided by the principle of representing all the various groups within the neighbouring boroughs. We deliberately reach out to even the most hard to reach members of the community and bring them on board.

The key criteria for admission onto Brit College is that you have the requisite entry requirements and meet the funding requirements. If we are able to support you, regardless of your background, we take you on board. We then encourage you to learn from others on the same course, treat everybody with respect, and come out with the appropriate skills and leadership attributes that will enable you to make an impact at work, in your own business and where you live.

Student Engagement Theme

Every member of the Brit Community has a say in the way they are taught, in the quality of their learning and in the content of the learning. We therefore consider students as key partners in quality assurance processes and in deciding the quality of experience they would like to have at the College. We encourage you to participate in all the activities and processes to improve the quality of your learning. We also constantly request for feedback and encourage you to participate in providing us with valuable information on how we are performing and what we can do to improve. Above all, you are free to approach any member of staff and provide direct feedback or lodge a complaint.

The College uses a range of surveys and paper questionnaires to gather your opinions and feedback about your learning experience during your time here. We have Student Representatives for each year group who are invited to monthly Academic Management Team Meetings. They also attend Academic Board meetings, Employers Forum and College Oversight Board Meetings. They are responsible for representing your views to management and ensuring that the student body is involved in College decisions. The College also has a Student Engagement Team Leader who supports students with issues that affect their academic progression. Student Consultation meetings are arranged to offer students the opportunity to speak directly with management and review the Academic Year.

The College values student feedback and will evaluate student responses to ensure action is taken if there are any concerns. The College will inform Student Representatives of actions and outcomes so that they can provide feedback to individuals and/or groups and work with the representatives in tracking progress on the actions.

The College places the students at the centre of everything it does, so it is important that they engage with these opportunities, as only then can we gain a truly accurate picture of your experience and continually work to improve it. We will not make decisions about you, without you!

Enhancement Theme

If we are doing well, we believe we can always do better. That means we are constantly reviewing everything we provide to the student, with a view to improving the learning experience. Through the student engagement processes, we expect you to participate actively in the process of enhancing the overall student experience.

Employability Theme

We believe all our students come here to study with a view to increasing their opportunities in work or in business. We deliberately design our curriculum and the way we teach it to prepare you for the challenges you face after you leave the College. Our relationship with you will not end at the end of your studies. We are happy for you to stay in touch and continue to give us feedback on how learning at Brit College helped you secure that job opportunity or the business that you have always wanted to run.

The purpose of this handbook is therefore to provide you with information that will help you get the best from your studies at Brit College. It details the various things you can expect from the College, alongside the responsibilities you have as a student.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

I would also like to introduce you to the QAA. This is a body that oversees and promotes quality in Higher Education in the UK. It also reviews relevant Colleges on behalf of other organisations such as HEFCE/SLC. QAA reviews are based on a set of expectations contained in the UK Quality Code. This is divided into Chapters each dealing with a different area, for example, Chapter 6 is on Assessment, whilst Chapter 3 is on Learning and Teaching. Other information within the chapters that has been used in preparing this document is presented in the Appendix.

We have worked closely within the requirements of QAA over the years. In February 2016 we had a major review (the Higher Education Review for Alternative Providers).

In such reviews, QAA makes judgements on Colleges, based on their performance. In the four areas the QAA reviews, Brit College met all UK Expectations. The following are four areas:

- the maintenance of the academic standards of awards
- the quality of student learning opportunities
- the quality of the information about learning opportunities
- the enhancement of student learning opportunities

The QAA team also identified areas of Good Practice which included:

- The College provides a detailed programme specification and other documentation of high quality, which are valued by students and extend beyond its formal obligations to the awarding organisation (Expectation A2.1)
- The College is embedding employability awareness and skills within the curriculum (Expectation B3)
- The College has created an inclusive and supportive learning environment fit for the purpose of meeting the expectations of its diverse intake (Expectation B4).

We are therefore excited that you have joined us at a time we are looking forward to maintaining these areas of good practice and building on them. The review team also identified areas where the college requires to improve (recommendations). The College is working with the recommendations in the form of an action plan, the implementation of which you are a part.

At the beginning of your studies we took you through an induction process where we explained most of the issues contained in this handbook. If you feel after reading this document that you still have more questions, please feel free to ask any member of staff.

I am also happy to help

Enjoy you time at Brit College

Chris Mabika
Vice Principal

GENERAL INFORMATION

This handbook will provide information on a wide variety of areas, and should be read alongside the various web sites that have useful information about the College and the local area. The notice boards are also useful in this context, and are updated on a regular basis.

The College address is:

**Brit College
Limehouse Campus
602 Commercial Road
London
E14 7HS**

P: +44(0)20 7265 8497 **F:** +44(0)20 7265 8468

Email: info@britcollege.org.uk

COLLEGE OPENING HOURS

The College is open from 08.45 to 20.15 hours, Monday to Thursday and 09.00 to 17.30 Friday and Saturday except bank holidays.

During non-term time college is open until 09.00 to 17.30 Monday to Friday.

College Website address: www.britcollege.org.uk

Staff Listing

Title and Name	Email Address
Chief Executive: Musaddiq Ahmed	musaddiq.ahmed@britcollege.org.uk
Vice Principal: Christopher Mabika	chris.mabika@britcollege.org.uk
Director of Business & Compliance: Aroz Miah	Aroz.miah@britcollege.org.uk
Operations Manager/ E-learning: Muhammad Ali	m.ali@britcollege.org.uk
Programme Leader: Dr Roman Puchkov	roman@britcollege.org.uk
Assessment Team Leader: Tahir Khan	tahir@britcollege.org.uk
Student Engagement Team Leader: Dr Mabel Zvobgo	mabel@britcollege.org.uk
Student Liaison Officer: Rachel Waud	rachel.waud@britcollege.org.uk
Accounts Officer: Mustafizur Rahman	mustafizur.rahman@britcollege.org.uk
Human Resources and Admin Officer: Roisin Marsh	roisin_marshall@britcollege.org.uk
Customer Service Officer: Sandra Medina	sandra.medina@britcollege.org.uk
Facilities and Customer Service Officer: Sadek Hussain	sadek.hussain@britcollege.org.uk
Records and Library Officer: Michael Bryant	micheal.bryant@britcollege.org.uk

Contact Information

For general enquiries:

To print documents please send attachments to:

If you are absent:

For account enquiries:

IT and E-Learning:

info@britcollege.org.uk

print@britcollege.org.uk

attendance@britcollege.org.uk

accounts@britcollege.org.uk

m.ali@britcollege.org.uk

Tuition Fees

The tuition fee for the course is £6000 per year. You may be eligible for a loan from Student Finance. The College can support you with your application to Student Finance. More information on Student Finance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login>

Student Services

Student identity (ID) cards

Every student enrolled with Brit College will be provided with a student ID card. If lost, a replacement card will be issued which may result in a cost.

Oyster Card

Student Services will assist students in obtaining a discount travel card for the public transport system. TFL website :<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/18-student>

NUS Card

This is a useful proof of student status and will enable you to get discounts on many products and services. Information on how to obtain your NUS Card will be provided at Induction, and is readily available on the NUS website.

Document Requests

Students may require a range of documents from the College through their student area. Examples of such documents are:

- Council tax letter
- Bank reference letter
- Oyster card
- Reference letter

Banking Service

Students can choose to open a bank account with any bank you choose. Students will need to provide proof of current address in the UK along with a letter from the College indicating that you are a current student.

Notice boards and information

The College places important information and latest updates on the notice boards. Please make sure you check the notice boards regularly. They contain interesting information on non-academic ideas and opportunities.

Canteen

There are canteen facilities with vending machines.

IT Lab

The College has IT facilities which are available for students to use. All computers have the required software installed. Laptops can be booked through tutors for use during class time subject to availability.

Library

The College has a library facility with all recommended text books and other books relevant to the course. Tutors can request academic books for the library. Students have access to Emerald an online journal database whilst on campus.

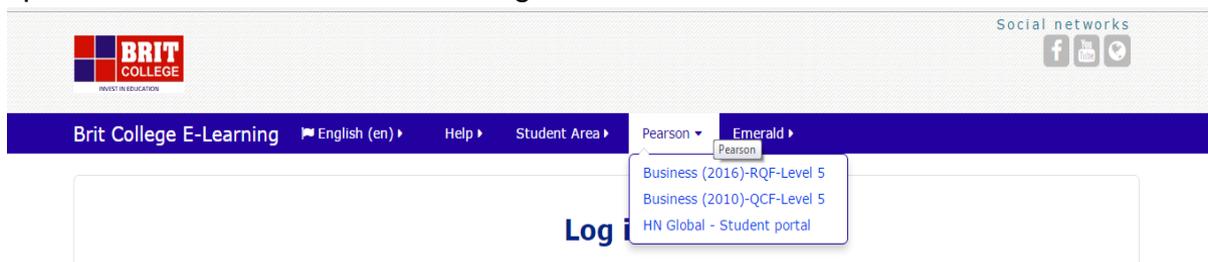
Students are recommended to use other online resources.

E-Learning

A virtual learning environment which allows students to access course material and upload assignments.

Programme Details

For programme specification relevant to your course please see Pearson specification available on E-Learning.



Unit handbooks and relevant college programme specifications are available on E-Learning.

HN Global for students on the RQF programme which can be accessed through your E-Learning log in.

Printing and photocopying

The College provides reasonably priced access to printing and photocopying facilities for students. See notice boards for details.

Student Welfare

The College provides support for all students. For example, Services include careers advice job searching and related advice, financial advice, help and guidance with personal issues, professional and academic issues.

Attendance

Attendance and Retention Policy

The College is committed to checking student attendance on a daily basis.

Brit College is committed to providing a positive learning environment for all students and extends this commitment to ensure an appropriate response in circumstances whereby a student's level of attendance is a concern. Wherever possible the College will strive to provide excellent support mechanisms for those students with difficulties in attending through pastoral care and appropriate and timely referrals to relevant support services. Brit College views **students as key and partners to this activity and as such prescribes actions which are engaging and sensitive** with regards to their attendance.

Increasingly, the College emphasizes the importance of the learning partnership between students and staff and the shared responsibility for achieving success.

Teachers are required to regularly check student attendance and achievement and to consider and respond proactively to student feedback. They are also responsible for ensuring the effective operation of the College's system of providing students with personal support.

There is a team of management staff who also deliver teaching and provide student support with a view to contributing significantly to the student experience-the Teaching and Learning Support Team.

Teaching and Learning Support Team plays an important role in providing a range of services which provide direct assistance to individual students and the staff who teach them as well as play a supervisory role on the teachers.

The College collects and monitors internal statistics around retention and success produced annually. These are considered by the Academic Management Team and compared with HESA performance indicator data. This is supplemented by internal student survey information and the results of the National Student Survey, which provide information at both local and institutional level on the student experience. Further feedback is gathered through the student representative system and from course evaluation.

Comparative analysis is conducted and reported during the annual monitoring process and appropriate action taken.

The College takes appropriate actions in response to low retention. These include but not limited to, providing individualised support to students struggling with their return to education, working with outside agents to support students not finding it easy with their education and those not able to decide what they want to do in life.

The attendance policy encourages the identification of at-risk students as regards continuation with their studies, which reflects as low attendance at the beginning, and putting procedures in place to support them before non-attendance becomes a major concern.

As regards attendance, students are required to bear the following in mind:

It would be helpful for students to always give reasonable notice of any planned or unavoidable absences

Although the College commits to developing timetables that are appropriate for most of the students, there may be logistical difficulties in making timetabling changes to accommodate all students

The College will keep a record of all student absences, and reminds those with long absences to improve their attendance. The Student Engagement Team Leader and the Student Liaison Officer work together to support every student and provide personal and pastoral support. Learners can contact them at attendance@britcollege.org.uk regarding their attendance, providing an explanation for their absence. This includes all notices including emergencies. Medical issues as well as maternity/paternity leave.

Extenuating Circumstances

Students may not take time off during term time. In extenuating circumstances the student must submit a request to the Student Engagement Team Leader/ Student Liaison Officer (attendance@britcollege.org.uk) providing an explanation for their absence.

Student Engagement Team Leader notes any requests for extenuating circumstances on the student's file. This will trigger a series of follow up calls and e-mails to ensure the student receives all advice and guidance required.

Attendance Register

Tutors are required to complete the electronic register on a sessional basis.

Tutors are required to inform the Student Engagement Team Leader of any student who leaves the class early.

Absences

Any absence due to illness or other unavoidable emergency should be notified to the Student Engagement Team Leader/ Student Liaison Officer at (attendance@britcollege.org.uk) quoting the student's ID number and the reason for their absence. This also includes all notices about medical issues as well as maternity/paternity leave. Any evidence to support this may be attached or brought in when the student next attends for record keeping by the College.

The Student Engagement Team Leader and Student Liaison Officer will keep records of all student absences, and remind those with long absences to improve their attendance.

Administrative Procedures for Extended Consecutive Absences (Identifying and managing at-risk students):

The College applies a traffic light system to identify and monitor at-risk students. An on-line report of such students is automatically generated (Attendance Monitoring Flagging System).

The flagging and actions are described below:

Traffic-Light (Attendance Monitoring Flagging System)

Weeks absence	Attendance Level	Risk Level	Colour	Action
1 Week	Normal	Low risk	Yellow	Call/Email
2 Weeks	Questionable	Moderate risk	Orange	Second call/e-mail and alert Operations Manager
3 Weeks	High Absenteeism	High Risk	Red	Operations Manager places student on the at-risk register and call/e-mail/text/letter to the student
4 Weeks	Very High Absenteeism	Very High Risk	Red	Emergency monitoring protocol: Home visit/contact next of kin
Beyond 4 weeks	Extreme	Very, Very High Risk	Red	Inform SLC and hand over to Vice Principal.
All medical (any time)			Blue	See note below

At-risk students who return (after 3 weeks) will attend a returning interview with a member of the Teaching and Learning Support Team to arrange an action plan. This will be tailor-made to their needs. The Assessment Team Leader will take over to check their individual progress until the student has caught up with their work, at which point they will be taken off the action plan and the at-risk register.

Learning and Teaching

The College recognises the idea that effective learning must be a partnership between the College, the teaching staff, the students, and the awarding bodies. The aim is for the teaching to be inspirational, providing knowledge, skills and understanding – as well as providing a context for you to be motivated, innovative and increasingly independent learners.

The ability of the College to offer an effective learning environment is primarily dependant on its academic and non-academic staff. We will ensure that the teaching staff share the aims and aspirations of the College, that they are appropriately qualified and willing to engage in professional development throughout their careers. The staff must be willing to evaluate their practice via a process of peer review and/or appraisal and participate in the review of their peers. The College will manage this process and provide the best possible learning environment for its staff and for you - its students.

The College fully agrees with the Quality Assurance Agency guidelines on effective learning. This is that *'effective learning occurs when students are enabled to:*

- *engage actively in learning, and participate fully in the learning opportunities that are presented to them*
- *understand their learning environment, its culture and resources*
- *embrace the aims and expectations of their chosen programme of study*
- *demonstrate understanding of, and an ability to reflect upon, the ways in which their skills and knowledge are developing*
- *recognise and value their existing knowledge and skills, and build upon them*
- *make effective and responsible use of advice, guidance and feedback from*
- *formative and summative assessment that is provided during their programme of study*
- *avail themselves of the opportunities to acquire and develop learning skills*
- *understand sound academic practice and behave with integrity*
- *contextualise and apply their developing knowledge and skills to their wider experience and plans for the future*
- *work together in an informal environment as well as in formal learning sessions*
- *act responsibly in planning their use of the resources available to support*
- *learning, including the effective use of their own time in independent study*
- *give constructive feedback on their perception of the quality of their learning experience*
- *engage in monitoring and influencing the curriculum*
- *show commitment to attaining the academic standards that have been defined for their programme of study'*

Source: Quality Assurance Agency B3 Quality Code Learning and Teaching 2012

Student responsibility to engage with the learning process

The induction process and every subsequent learning experience will emphasize the need for you to take responsibility for your own learning. You must prioritise your learning over other aspects of your life and engage as an increasingly independent learner as you progress through your programme of study.

The process by which you become an effective independent learner will depend on your interaction with the teaching staff and with your peers, and will be shaped by the physical learning environment. The College accepts its responsibility to provide a learning environment to meet these needs and to engage effective teaching staff. You must now accept your responsibility to spend the hours and days engaged in effective study in order to succeed.

Timetables

Before the start of each term, students will be informed of the new timetable for the term. During the first four weeks of the term, timetables may change. We endeavour to keep disruption to a minimum. However, class times and room locations may at times need to be amended. Schedules may change from term to term, although we attempt to provide classes at the times most convenient to you.

Be aware that timetables – days and hours of attendance – may change every term.

Progression

In each term you will study two units. In each year you will study eight units. In order to progress from Year one to Year Two you must successfully complete a minimum of six units. Any outstanding units will be studied in your own time during the second year. Students who cannot meet the minimum six units for progression to second year will need to complete the first year units before they can progress to second year. Please note that funding may not be available for the repeat year.

Assessment

There are two types of assessment that you need to be familiar with. These are formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment is where you complete an assessed task and receive feedback (a grade) – but this grade does not count towards the final grade at the end of the unit. In contrast, summative assessment is where you receive both feedback and the grade you will indicate your achievement of the unit achieve will determine or contribute to your overall unit mark.

A characteristic of the weekly learning experience will be an aspect of formative assessment. This formative assessment will provide you with a yardstick against which the assessor measures your skills and understanding. The formative assessments will also rehearse for the nature and scope of the summative assessments which follow. The College recognises the formative nature of early summative assignments, as they provide a critical guide to your level of achievement.

So the purpose of assessment for the three key groups can be. Assessment has different purposes for the three key groups indicated below:

For the student: individual pieces of assessment provide a source of motivation for study; it promotes learning by providing feedback on performance and helps students to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

For the Tutor: assessment provides an opportunity to evaluate the knowledge, understanding, ability and skills of different students. The overall profile of student performance offers useful information for assessing the effectiveness of course content and teaching methods.

For the institution: assessment provides information on which decisions on students' progression and the receipt of awards may be based. The assessment process enables the institution to ensure that appropriate national standards are being met. Information from assessment, such as mark or grade distributions is very valuable in enabling the College to evaluate its effectiveness.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted online on Moodle, the College's Virtual Learning Environment unless students are instructed otherwise. Online submissions will save paper, keep the process accurate and efficient and also allow you to submit work from home.

Assignments should be uploaded in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word documents
- PDF files
- Open Office documents

It is your responsibility to ensure that assignments are uploaded to the correct module folder. Failure to do so may result in being marked absent for the submission. All queries regarding assignments should be directed to assignments@britcollege.org.uk which will be monitored by the Operations Manager.

Assessment Feedback and Marking

It is the responsibility of the College and each individual lecturer to provide efficient and effective feedback to you and your colleagues. This feedback is equally important in both formative and summative assessments. Indeed, given the far greater control of the former, there is a greater responsibility to ensure that we maximise every opportunity to provide good feedback. Feedback given to students should:

- Be provided in a timely and efficient manner;
- Highlight areas of achievement, areas for improvement, and areas of concern, on the part of the student;
- Indicate areas for further development that could have earned additional marks;
- Offer comments on style and/or structural issues that are restricting achievement;

- Be related to each specific Learning Outcome in the assessment;
- Reflect the marking scheme and/or levels of performance issued to the students.

The feedback you get should emphasise the areas you have done well, and should suggest where you can improve your work. It will only be effective in doing this if your work is your own and reflects your maximum effort and understanding.

Resubmission of failed work

An Academic Assessment Board will be convened no more than seven days after the two week period in 9.4 above, to approve the results and set the resubmission deadline. The resubmission deadline will be communicated on the same day that results are published.

Students who require support can access it from the date of result publication up to the resubmission deadline.

Timetabling will ensure that allocated teacher(s) will be available to provide support (e.g. every afternoon) to students at the end of each term; students will have access to a maximum of two opportunities for support. No further support will be provided after the resubmission deadline.

Students who require support but do not take it up will be placed on the 'at-risk' register and managed separately.

Plagiarism

All student work will need to go through Turnitin before final submission.

The maximum level of plagiarism allowed in a document is 25%

Between 25% and 35% the teacher marking the work should consider the entire plagiarism report and assess the distribution of percentages. The teacher then uses his/her own discretion to decide whether to accept or reject the work depending on

the comments in the plagiarism report, sources of the plagiarism and concentration of plagiarised work.

More detailed checking is required for plagiarism reports with readings above 35%. Options available include a referral for large paragraphs/sections showing word for word copying from one source or more.

Breach of the plagiarism policy can result in your work being referred or a recommendation for you to be discharged from the college, further details are in the Student Misconduct Policy.

Extenuating Circumstances

Students who cannot submit their assignment on the submission date must put a request in writing to the Student Engagement Team Leader at least 10 working days before the submission date, stating the reasons and providing any evidence.

Health and Safety

If you have any health and safety concern that Brit College staff should be aware of, please inform our Health and Safety Officer. If there is an emergency or accident, please notify any staff member immediately, and if urgent help is needed dial 999.

First Aid

The College has two qualified First Aiders Aid Officers. First aid facility is available at the Reception.

Fire Safety

There will be a fire drill for each new cohort at the beginning of term. In the event of a fire please evacuate to the safety point across the bridge. The Facilities officer will be the Fire Marshall and evacuate the building.

College Rules

➤ **Food and drink**

No food or drink is allowed in any classroom, IT suites, library, or study area.

➤ **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building, corridors and staircases. This is a serious offence and it is prohibited by law and is a fire and health hazard.

➤ **Mobile phones and other electronic equipment**

All mobile phones or any other electronic equipment must be **turned off** during class time, in the library, and other study areas.

➤ **Internet Access**

All information or data downloaded from the Internet will become the property of Brit College. As such, Brit College reserves the right of entry to any files that have been downloaded from the Internet to a computer. It is prohibited to:

- Download any music or movie files
- Download any other material that may affect the integrity of Brit College equipment
- Download shareware programs
- Download pornographic material

Students involved in any of the above actions will be subjected to disciplinary actions.

Care of equipment

Students are expected to treat all property on Brit College premises with care.

Damage or loss caused from misuse, recklessness, or carelessness of any property may result in the student being required to pay for the damage or loss.

- Students are not permitted to use CD/DVDs in any computer unless directed to do so by a tutor.
- At no time are students allowed to try to gain unauthorised access to files or systems.
- At no time are students allowed to remove computer hardware or software from college premises.
- If equipment is stolen, the police will be immediately informed and the appropriate action will be taken.
- Students found guilty of stealing property from college will be expelled from the College and SLC would be informed.

CCTV (Closed Circuit Television)

At College sites, we may use closed circuit television (CCTV) systems to monitor the premises for the purposes of:

- Employee and customer safety and security
- Prevention and detection of crime
- Apprehension and prosecution of offenders
- Exam and/or time-constrained assessment invigilation

If you have any questions surrounding CCTV, please contact the IT services at m.ali@britcollege.org.uk

Prevent Duty

The college promotes freedom of expression. However if a student feels other students, staff or visitors are expressing views that might incite extreme behaviour or promote extreme views they should report this to the college Prevent lead Aroz Miah

(aroz.miah@britcollege.org.uk) immediately. For further details please refer to the Prevent policy available on E-Learning.

Disabilities

A Student with a disability has an equal right of study. Brit College will make reasonable adjustments to its education provision, excepting where this is expressly prohibited by the relevant awarding body, for a student with a disability, who meets the relevant entry requirements.

Confidentiality

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act, we cannot discuss individual student's issues over the telephone or to a third party without the permission/consent of the student concerned.

Communications

The College prides itself on the good communications it has been with both staff and students. It has detailed this good practice in a separate Marketing and Communications Policy. You should read this and if you have any communication issues contact a senior member of staff.

Student details

You must give us accurate information and inform us of any changes in your personal details (e.g., address or telephone). 'Change of Details' can be recorded on the student portal. The College will not be held responsible or liable for any loss of correspondence due to any lack and inappropriate information provided by a student.

Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy

Every student has the right of complaint and academic appeal to ensure academic standards are maintained. All complaints and appeals will be taken seriously and treated with utmost confidentiality, fairness and promptness. The College will ensure that no student is disadvantaged as a result of lodging a complaint/appeal. Students can also lodge complaints/appeals collectively or through a Student Representative if they wish. In this case, there should be one nominated spokesperson that the College will communicate with.

The College seeks to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity and cooperates with students to reach an amicable resolution. Complaints/appeals are monitored and may be used to inform strategic decisions. The following procedures are applicable to all registered Brit College students. If you have left the College you can also use the procedures within 30 days of the end of registration.

Complaints procedure

The following procedure is used to deal with a complaint from a student, including any complaint regarding educational matters. The aim is for problems to be resolved quickly, simply and fairly. It is hoped that most issues can be settled amicably at the first stage. To make a complaint, you must start at Stage 1 of the process.

Stage 1

Timescale: Outcome will be communicated within 2 weeks of the complaint being made. Where this is not possible, you will be informed of an alternative timescale

Students are expected to try and resolve a complaint informally with the person involved. If you have a complaint, speak directly to the member of staff concerned. If you feel unable to approach that person, you should raise it with someone you feel comfortable with, such as your personal tutor or the Welfare Officer. The complaint should be raised within 1 month of the circumstance occurring so that it can be resolved quickly.

You are expected to give a clear explanation of the problem and the outcome that you are expecting. The staff member is expected to listen to your complaint and offer a solution that is practical and reasonable. You should engage in conversation to reach a mutual understanding of the problem and the agreed outcome.

The staff member should keep record of the agreed outcome and you will be informed that the complaint has been resolved.

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you can progress to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

Stage 2

Timescale: The complaint should be submitted within one month of the outcome from Stage 1. The outcome of Stage 2 will be communicated to you within 4 weeks of the complaint being received. Where this is not possible, you will be informed of an alternative timescale.

If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure, you may refer it to the Director of Business and compliance as a formal complaint. This should be submitted in writing and include the following:

- The nature of your complaint;
- Any supporting evidence;
- Why the outcome of the Stage 1 complaint was unsatisfactory;
- What outcome you are seeking.

The Vice Principal will refer the complaint to the Director of Business and Compliance and ensure that an investigation is carried out which is fair and transparent. Other parties involved may be contacted if required. You will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint at all stages.

After the investigation has been completed, you will receive a written response of the outcome.

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you can progress to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

Stage 3

Timescale: The complaint should be submitted within one month of the outcome from Stage 2. The outcome of Stage 3 will be communicated to you within 4 weeks of the complaint being received. Where this is not possible, you will be informed of an alternative timescale.

If you are not satisfied that the grievance has been dealt with satisfactorily, you may make a formal complaint to the Vice Principal. This should be made in writing and include the following:

- Why the outcome of the Stage 2 complaint was unsatisfactory;
- How the procedure of the Stage 2 complaint was procedurally incorrect and how this made a significant difference to the outcome of the complaint

The Vice Principal will convene a Complaints Panel whereby each stage of the complaint will be reviewed to see how it was dealt with. You will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint at all stages.

Once a decision is made, you will be given a written notice of the outcome. You will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter which confirms that the complaint has gone through all of the College's internal complaints procedures, and is now closed.

Academic Appeals Procedure

Students have the right of appeal regarding assessment decisions to the Assessment Board or Academic Board. Appeals must be made on valid grounds with reference to the appropriate assessment regulations and procedures. The grounds for an academic appeal are as follows:

- a) There was a **procedural irregularity** (including administrative error) which resulted in parts of the assessment procedure not being applied correctly. This irregularity has caused doubt as to whether the grade/assessment decision is correct; had this irregularity not occurred the assessment decision may have been different.
- b) There were **circumstances affecting the student's performance** which were not made aware to the examiner(s) at the time the decision was made, and **could not** reasonably have been made present to the examiner(s) on time.
- c) There exists evidence of **prejudice or bias** on the part of one or more examiners.

The following will not be considered as grounds for appeal:

- a) **Academic judgement:** A student may not appeal against a grade/decision (academic judgement) simply if the student feels the grade is incorrect and does not reflect their work. This can only be appealed against if it falls under a case of procedural irregularity. Students are advised to seek clarification of these grades from their lecturer or personal tutor.
- b) **Competency standards:** Concerns relating to the quality of teaching or to the delivery of the programme will not be considered as grounds for appeal. These should be raised under the Student Complaints Policy as they occur.

Early Resolution

If you are unhappy with an assessment decision, the College encourages you to discuss your marks informally with your lecturer or personal tutor. They will be able to provide you with clarification about the assessment decision, explain the College's

marking procedures and address any concerns you have. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can make a formal academic appeal.

Formal Academic Appeal

Timescale: An academic appeal must be lodged within one calendar month of the publication of the assessment decision. Appeals received out of time will not be considered. The outcome of your appeal will be communicated to you within 6 weeks of the appeal being received.

The appeal should be submitted in writing to the Vice Principal and must include:

- **Reason for the appeal:** This should explain the type of decision being appealed against e.g. a final assessment grade
- **Grounds for appeal:** You should indicate which of the grounds for appeal (listed above) apply.
- **Summary:** Please summarise the reasons for your appeal including any steps you have already taken and the outcome you are hoping for as a result of your appeal. You may also attach any supporting evidence.

The Vice Principal will consult with the Assessment Board regarding your appeal. You may be asked for more evidence or clarification if required. Your appeal will be investigated and you may be invited to attend an appeal hearing if required. A decision will be made and your appeal will either be:

- a) **Rejected:** if it is decided that you do not have sufficient grounds for appeal. This will be communicated to you in writing.
- b) **Accepted:** the Assessment Board will seek clarification from the decision making body and request they submit a formal, written response.

This formal response will have one of the following outcomes, accompanied by an explanation:

- a) A revised decision in light of the appeal
- b) No changes to the original decision

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your appeal, you may request that it is reviewed by a higher body within the College. Alternatively, you may request a Completion of Procedures letter so that you can refer your appeal to the OIA (see below).

1. Review Stage

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your academic appeal, you may request that it is reviewed by a higher body within the College.

Timescale: A request for review must be lodged within one calendar month of the appeal outcome and should be submitted in writing to the Vice Principal. The outcome of the review will be communicated to you within 6 weeks.

The Vice Principal will consult with the Academic Board to investigate whether the appeal procedure was followed correctly and fairly, and whether a reasonable outcome was reached. The outcome of the review will be communicated to you in writing and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter to confirm that the appeal has been through all procedures and is closed.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the review, you may refer your appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

If you are still dissatisfied with the handling or the outcome of a complaint after all internal procedures have been exhausted, you may refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA is an independent body, external to the College, set up to review student complaints. Further information is available from the OIA website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

Appendix

Relevant QAA Indicators applied in preparing this Student Handbook.

Chapter 3: Indicator 9

Every student is enabled to monitor their progress and further their academic

Development through the provision of regular opportunities to reflect on feedback and engage in dialogue with staff.

Chapter 5

Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Chapter 6: Indicator 1

Providers operate effective policies, regulations and processes which ensure that the academic standard for each award of credit or a qualification is rigorously set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is equitably judged against this standard.

Chapter 4: Indicator 7

Higher education providers ensure staff who enable students to develop and achieve are appropriately qualified, competent, up to date and supported.

Chapter 6: Indicator 1

Providers operate effective policies, regulations and processes which ensure that the academic standard for each award of credit or a qualification is rigorously set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is equitably judged against this standard.

Chapter 6: Indicator 4

Higher education providers ensure all students have opportunities to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional progression

Chapter 6: Indicator 4

Providers assure themselves that everyone involved in the assessment of student work, including prior learning, and associated assessment processes is competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

Chapter 6: Indicator 7

Students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice

Chapter 6: Indicator 8

The volume, timing and nature of assessment enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.

Chapter 9: Indicator 6

Providers ensure that appropriate action is taken following an appeal or complaint.

Chapter B9

Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

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