



Our approach to consumer law

This guidance has been produced taking advice from the Competition and Markets Authority's document 'UK Higher Education Provider – Advice on Consumer Protection Law'

To access the full document please click the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf

Student research and application stage

To comply with the CPRs Gateshead College will provide prospective students with material information – including about the courses we offer, the structure of courses, and the fees/costs. This will be given before they make a decision about which courses and HE providers to apply to. This includes information given in writing, visually and verbally. The college will ensure this information is accurate and will not omit important information that could affect students' decisions.

The information will be accurate, clear, unambiguous and timely, and will be given up front.

The college will ensure that information is easily accessible – for example, via our website, prospectuses, course and departmental handbooks and at open days.

The college will ensure that we draw prospective students' attention to important rules and regulations, and make them accessible.

Offer stage

When an offer is made by Gateshead College and accepted by the learner, the college and the learner have entered in to a contract. The Consumer Protection from unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) both now apply.

To comply with both pieces of legislation Gateshead College will ensure that:

- We continue to provide important information to prospective students to inform their decisions about which offer(s) to accept
- We will draw prospective students' attention to our full terms and conditions, these are easily accessible, and we will highlight particularly important terms
- We will provide prospective students with the necessary pre-contract information under the CCRs at the latest before they accept an offer of a place on a course
- Where the college anticipates that some things might change after the offer is accepted, we will make clear in the pre-contract information what could change, when, and how, so that the student can agree to this

- Any terms in the contract that purport to allow changes to the precontract information are fair under unfair terms legislation.

At the stage of offer and acceptance of a place on a course, a contract is concluded between the college and student.

The college will:

(i) provide confirmation of the contract on a durable medium, for example as attachments to an email. The confirmation must include all pre-contract information, unless it has already been provided on a durable medium; and

(ii) remember to give prospective students notice of their 14-day right to cancel, where the application and offer are carried out at a distance.

Student enrolment stage:

In principle, the pre-contract information the college gave to students at the offer stage should still be accurate on enrolment. In any event, if it has been necessary to make any changes that affect material information (as defined in the CPRs), the college will ensure that we tell students about these at the earliest opportunity.

The college will ensure that we draw students' attention to our terms and conditions, and any other rules and regulations, and make them accessible. The college will highlight important and surprising terms and provisions to students.

Ensuring that terms and conditions between the college and students are fair

The college will ensure that:

- Our terms can be easily located and accessed (for example, on our website) and are available to students
- Students are aware of our terms and that we give them the opportunity to review them before they accept an offer
- We will highlight any important terms and draw them to students' attention before they accept an offer, so that their significance is not missed
- Our terms are written in plain and intelligible language so that students understand them and understand how they affect their rights and obligations and how the terms could impact them
- Our terms are not drafted in such a way that their effect could be unfair. They will strike a fair balance between the college's rights and obligations and those of students.