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TCPS

THAMES COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

[STAFF HANDBOOK]

The Employee Handbook provides a summary of employee policies, benefits and guidelines

Welcome to Thames College of Professional Studies (TCPS)

Introduction

Our aim in producing this document was to create a one-stop information point where you would be able to access all the information you are likely to need in relation to your employment with us. The Handbook and corresponding policy documents form part of your contract of employment with Thames College of Professional Studies.

The document gives an overview of the terms and conditions of your employment, and outlines what you can expect from us as your employer. In return we ask you for a high degree of commitment, dedication and loyalty to help us achieve the aims and objectives of the College.

I hope you find this a useful guide during your employment with us. However if you are unable to find the answer to your question here, please feel free to contact your line manager who will certainly be able to find an answer for you.

Signed: _____

Director TCPS

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Thames College of Professional Studies

About Us

Thames College of Professional Studies is an independent institution for further and higher studies established to provide quality education at affordable fees for a wide range of academic, professional and vocational qualifications in English, Business Management and Tourism Management.

TCPS is an internationally recognized institution, which works with many reputed organizations to offer UK recognized qualifications (NQF / QCF).

TCPS is committed to enabling students to achieve individual success through academic excellence. We are also committed to promoting industrial competitiveness by providing relevant high quality education and training to people at work.

TCPS endeavours to provide support for our overseas students and make their stay in the UK a happy and fulfilling experience. Assistance is offered with university admission and career progression. We help in familiarization, local accommodation and home-stay.

You can get more information on our website at www.tcps.co.uk

Induction

Thames College of Professional Studies believes its employees are its greatest asset and recognises its responsibility to ensure they are afforded appropriate development throughout their employment. This development begins at the Induction stage when a new employee joins.

Our aim is to support and develop employees in their role so that they feel confident to undertake the responsibilities placed upon them and ultimately are able to contribute to the success of the organisation.

Induction will be spread over your first few weeks in post, and is generally planned on a first day, first week basis. The content and duration of the induction program will be dependent on the scope and complexity of your job, and your line manager will outline this in detail to you on your first day with us.

Statement of Employment Terms and Conditions

As an employee of Thames College of Professional Studies you will have received a document setting out specific terms and conditions (Employment Contract) of service as they relate to your post within 8 weeks of your commencement date. This includes details of:

- the names of the employer and the employee;
- the date when the employment (and the period of continuous employment) began;
- remuneration and the intervals at which it is to be paid;

- hours of work;
- holiday entitlement;
- entitlement to sick leave, including any entitlement to sick pay;
- pensions and pension schemes;
- the entitlement of employer and employee to notice of termination;
- job title (or a brief job description);
- Where it is not permanent, the period for which the employment is expected to continue or, if it is for a fixed term, the date when it is to end.
- either the place of work or, if required to work in more than one location, an indication of this and of the employer's address; and
- Details of the existence of any relevant collective agreements which directly affect the terms and conditions of your employment.

Further detailed policies and procedures which may not be mentioned as part of this document, but which still form part of your conditions of employment with us can be accessed through your line manager. This handbook also summarises the main terms of your employment.

Thames College of Professional Studies reserves the right to change its terms & conditions and employment policies from time to time. You will be notified at the earliest opportunity of these changes by way of general notice to all employees affected by the change. Where a contractual change in your terms and conditions of employment results in a change to your written statement of particulars of employment, we will give you a written statement of the change at the earliest opportunity.

Probation Periods

All new staff is subject to a probationary period of 6 months. An initial informal review will take place after 3 months with your line manager, with a formal review after 6 months. Your appointment will be confirmed on satisfactory completion of the 6 month period. During this probationary period you will be given appropriate support and development opportunity to help you reach the required standards. Extension of the probationary period may be granted to enable the required standards to be achieved, but failure to do so could result in termination of your employment.

Your Attendance at Work

Thames College of Professional Studies values good attendance at work and is committed to improving the general wellbeing of its employees to achieve this. Although we aim to secure regular attendance, we do not expect employees to attend when they are unwell.

Notification of Absence

Your line manager should be notified as early as possible if absence from work is anticipated for hospitalisation and other medical treatment.

If you are unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, your line manager must be notified by telephone before your normal start time or as soon thereafter as possible on the first day of absence, if possible indicating a date of return. Notification should be made by you personally unless impossible due to the nature of the illness where you should arrange for someone else to call on your behalf. During prolonged periods of absence, your manager should be kept informed of progress and an expected date of return.

Any employee who has been absent due to sickness and is found not to have been genuinely ill will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

Sickness Payments

Payment of Occupational Sick Pay will be made on a sliding scale depending on length of service and sickness period according to the labour law. If sickness is more than 7 days you will require a statement of Fitness for Work from your G.P.

Hours of Work

Your normal hours and working pattern will be specified in your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment. The full-time contracted hours for all posts within the organisation are 35 hours per week excluding daily meal breaks. A daily unpaid lunch break of a minimum of one hour must be taken if you work more than six hours daily.

Thames College of Professional Studies reserves the right to vary your hours and pattern of working, following consultation and agreement with you.

Persistent poor timekeeping means that colleagues are put under pressure to cover your duties. This is not acceptable and will therefore be treated as a potential disciplinary offence under our disciplinary procedures.

Flexible Working

Thames College of Professional Studies has a policy of trying to assist staff to balance their work and home life, and is therefore willing to consider requests from staff to vary their working hours or work pattern. Such requests will be considered taking into account the impact on the organisation, work colleagues and any other relevant factors. Should you wish to discuss this, you should speak to your line manager.

Staff with children under the age of six, or under eighteen or if the child receives Disability Living Allowance have a statutory right to request flexible working and the organisation has a duty to seriously consider this request.

Criminal Records Checks (CRB)

Certain employees of Thames College of Professional Studies may be required to undergo a criminal records office check. This is only in very special circumstances where your employment with us means you are likely to come into contact with children or vulnerable adults (or certain other particular circumstances). Should this be the case, we will discuss

the situation with you prior to confirming your appointment (or relevant change to your job).

Conflict of Interest

You should not, directly or indirectly, engage in, or have any interest, financial or otherwise, in any other business enterprise which interferes or is likely to interfere with your independent exercise of judgement in Thames College of Professional Studies' best interest.

Generally a conflict of interests exists when an employee is involved in an activity:

- Provides products or services directly to, or purchase products or services from Thames College of Professional Studies.
- Subjects the employee to unreasonable time demands that prevent the employee from devoting proper attention to his or her responsibilities to Thames College of Professional Studies
- Which is so operated that the employee's involvement with the outside business activity will reflect adversely on Thames College of Professional Studies

Should you be in doubt as to whether an activity involves a conflict, you should discuss the situation with your manager.

Standards of Performance and Behaviour at Work

Appearance

Thames College of Professional Studies does not seek to inhibit individual choice in relation to your appearance. However, you are expected to dress appropriately at all times in relation to your role, and to ensure that your personal hygiene and grooming are properly attended to prior to presenting yourself at work. If you have any queries about what is appropriate, these should be directed to your line manager.

College Premises

You must not bring any unauthorised person on to Thames College of Professional Studies property without prior agreement from your line manager, unless you are authorised to do so as part of your job. In these circumstances you are responsible for ensuring that your visitors are appropriately monitored during their stay, and that they do not access areas or College property inappropriately.

You must not remove Thames College of Professional Studies property from the organisation's premises unless prior authority from your line manager has been given.

Personal Property

Any personal property such as jewellery, cash, credit cards, clothes, cars, motorbikes or bicycles etc. left on Thames College of Professional Studies premises is done so entirely at your own risk. You are strongly advised not to leave any valuables unattended, either on our

premises, our vehicles or in your own vehicle. Thames College of Professional Studies does not accept liability for loss or damage to any personal property whatsoever.

Telephones & Correspondence

College telephone / mobile phone or postal facilities must not be used for private purposes without prior permission from your line manager. If, for any reason, personal use is made of these items then arrangements must be made to pay the cost price of all services used. Abuse of these facilities will be considered a potential disciplinary matter.

Smoking and Other Substances at Work

Legislation now exist which makes it illegal to smoke in enclosed public spaces. Smoking is therefore strictly prohibited on all Thames College of Professional Studies premises (including entrances and exits).

Outside areas have been identified for those who wish to smoke during their break-time. Should you wish to avail yourself of these facilities, please speak to your line manager.

Bringing alcohol or any unlawful drugs to the workplace, and / or imbibing them there is strictly prohibited both during work time or during a period prior to work where the effects carry over to the workplace. Any such instances will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and may lead to your summary dismissal.

Confidentiality

It is a condition of your employment that you have a duty of confidentiality with regards to Thames College of Professional Studies.

During the course of your employment you may find yourself in possession of sensitive information, the disclosure of which could be construed as a breach of confidentiality. It is a condition of your employment that you have a duty of confidentiality to the College, and you must not discuss any College sensitive or confidential matter whatsoever with any outside organisation including the media.

Any such breach of confidentiality would be deemed as gross misconduct except as otherwise provided or as permitted by any current legislation (e.g. the UK Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and could lead to your dismissal.

Computer, email and Internet use

If you have access to the College's computers including email and access to the internet as part of your job, you must not abuse this by using these facilities for purposes unrelated to College business.

Limited personal use of the internet is permitted during your formal breaks. All internet use is monitored and accessing pornographic or other unsuitable material, including auction or

certain social networking sites is strictly prohibited and would be considered a serious disciplinary offence which may result in dismissal.

Only software packages properly authorised and installed by the College may be used on College equipment, you must therefore not load any unauthorised software onto College computers. If you have a College email address, this is provided for responsible use on College business and should not be used in any other way whatsoever.

Receipt of Gifts

Your working relationships may bring you into contact with outside organisations where it is normal business practice or social convention to offer hospitality, and sometimes gifts. Offers of this kind to you or your family can place you in a difficult position. Therefore no employee or any member of his or her immediate family should accept from a supplier, customer or other person doing business with Thames College of Professional Studies, payments of money under any circumstances, or special considerations, such as discounts or gifts of materials, equipment, services, facilities or anything else of value unless:

- They are in each instance of a very minor nature usually associated with accepted business practice.
- They do not improperly interfere with your independence of judgement or action in the performance of your employment.
- In every circumstance where a gift is offered, the advice of your line manager must be sought.

Bribery and other Corrupt Behaviour

The College has a strict anti-bribery and corruption policy in line with the Bribery Act (2010). A bribe is defined as: giving someone a financial or other advantage to encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly or to reward that person for having already done so.

If you bribe (or attempt to bribe) another person, intending either to obtain or retain business for the College, or to obtain or retain an advantage in the conduct of the College's business this will be considered gross misconduct. Similarly accepting or allowing another person to accept a bribe will be considered gross misconduct. In these circumstances you will be subject to formal investigation under the College's disciplinary procedures, and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be applied.

Data Protection and Access to Information

Thames College of Professional Studies will comply with all statutory requirements of the Data Protection Act by registering all personal data held on its computer and/or related electronic equipment and by taking all reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy and confidentiality of such information.

The Data Protection Act protects individuals' rights concerning information about them held on computer. Anyone processing personal data must comply with the eight principles of good practice. Data must be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection

Employees can request access to the information held on them by the College. All requests by employees to gain access to their personnel records should be made in writing. There is no charge for this service.

Changes in Personal Information for Employment Purposes

It is important that our records are correct, as inaccurate or out of date information may affect your salary or cause difficulties in situations where contact is required for emergencies. You **must** notify your Line Manager immediately of all changes in the following personal information:

- Name
- Home address
- Telephone number
- Bank account details
- Examinations passed/qualifications gained
- Emergency contact
- Criminal charge, caution or conviction
- Conflict, or potential conflict of interest

Personal data on employees is held in accordance with the provisions of the College's Data Protection Policy.

Valuing Diversity and Dignity at Work

Valuing Diversity

Statement

Thames College of Professional Studies is committed to valuing diversity and seeks to provide all staff with the opportunity for employment, career and personal development on the basis of ability, qualifications and suitability for the work as well as their potential to be developed into the job.

We believe that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas, thinking and approaches which make the way work is undertaken more effective and efficient.

TCPS will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination against any person on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation whether in the field of recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, career progression, training, transfer or dismissal.

It is also the responsibility of all staff in their daily actions, decisions and behaviour to endeavour to promote these concepts, to comply with all relevant legislation and to ensure that they do not discriminate against colleagues, customers, suppliers or any other person associated with the College.

Key Actions

In adopting these principles Thames College of Professional Studies:

Will not tolerate acts that breach this policy and all such breaches or alleged breaches will be taken seriously, be fully investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action where appropriate.

Fully recognises its legal obligations under all relevant legislation and codes of practice.

Will allow staff to pursue any matter through the internal procedures which they believe has exposed them to inequitable treatment within the scope of this policy.

Will ensure that all managers understand and maintain their responsibilities and those of their team under this policy.

Will offer opportunities for flexible working patterns, wherever operationally feasible, to help employees to combine a career with their domestic responsibilities.

Will provide equal opportunity to all who apply for vacancies through open competition.

Will select candidates only on the basis of their ability to carry out the job, using a clear and open process.

Will provide all employees with the training and development that they need to carry out their job effectively.

Will provide all reasonable assistance to employees who are or who become disabled, making reasonable adjustments wherever possible to provide continued employment. We will ensure an appropriate risk assessment is carried out and that appropriate specialist advice is obtained when necessary.

Will distribute and publicise this policy statement throughout the College

Dignity at Work

Statement

The College believes that the working environment should at all times be supportive of the dignity and respect of individuals. If a complaint of harassment is brought to the attention of management, it will be investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken.

What and How of Harassment

Harassment can be defined as conduct, which is unwanted and offensive and affects the dignity of an individual or group of individuals.

Sexual harassment is defined as “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of women and men at work”. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct.

People can be subject to harassment on a wide variety of grounds including:

- race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour
- sex or sexual orientation
- religious or political convictions
- willingness to challenge harassment, leading to victimisation
- disabilities, sensory impairments or learning difficulties
- status as ex-offenders
- age
- real or suspected infection with a blood borne virus (eg AIDS/HIV)
- membership of a trade union or activities associated with membership

Forms may include:

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
- verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, sectarian songs, letters and so on
- visual display of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags and emblems
- isolation or non-cooperation at work, exclusion from social activities
- coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- intrusion by pestering, spying, following someone
- bullying

What should I do if subject to Harassment?

If you feel you are being harassed you are strongly encouraged to seek early advice/support from your line manager. If you feel your line manager is harassing you, then you should contact his / her immediate line manager.

You should also keep a written record detailing the incidents of harassment and any requests made to the harasser to stop. This written record should be made as soon as possible after the events giving rise to concern and should include dates, times, places and the circumstances of what happened.

The College has a formal procedure for dealing with these issues which you can obtain from your line manager.

Pay, Benefits & Pensions

Salary Arrangements

Your salary will be paid monthly in arrears in the first week of each month by direct credit transfer to your designated bank account.

Your basic pay was outlined in your letter of appointment / statement of terms and conditions. Any subsequent amendments to your basic pay will be notified to you in writing by the College.

Part-time employees will be paid on a pro rata basis based on the hours they work. In all other aspects, their salaries will be paid in accordance with the pay arrangements for full-time employees of the College.

If any queries arise with regard to pay, or if it looks as if a mistake has been made, speak to your line manager immediately so that they can take appropriate action. Unless agreed otherwise, any pay errors, whether of over or underpayment, will be rectified in the next salary payment.

Appropriate deductions will be made from pay including income tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs), which are subject to each employee's earning level, family status and the number of hours worked.

Overtime

Overtime is defined as all hours worked in excess of your full time contracted hours, which has the explicit approval of your manager. Overtime is payable to posts which have been specifically designated as qualifying for overtime payment

For periods worked between Monday and Friday inclusively, overtime is payable at time and a half.

Income Tax

If there are any changes in your personal circumstances which will affect your tax status, you should notify the Inland Revenue, who will automatically inform the College of any changes to your tax code. Addresses of local offices and enquiry centres can be found here: <http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/menus/officesmenu.htm>

Business Travel

You will be reimbursed for any expenditure necessarily incurred in order to do your job when working away from your normal place of work. Public Transport and accommodation costs will be reimbursed at actual cost – appropriate receipts must accompany all claims.

Sickness Pay Provision

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

Most employees have a right to statutory sick pay (SSP) as long as they earn more than the lower earnings level, and are not over state retirement age which is currently 65. SSP is not however payable for the first three qualifying days of absence. (A qualifying day is a day on which you are normally expected to work under your contract of employment).

There is a limit of 28 weeks' SSP in any one period of sickness or linked periods. (Periods of sickness are said to be linked if the second period starts within eight weeks of the end of the first period.) SSP is paid in the same way as ordinary pay and is liable to tax and National Insurance contributions.

Occupational Sick Pay

Occupational sick pay is entirely at the discretion of the College but will not be unreasonably withheld as long as you have complied with the notification requirements and have produced any necessary medical certificates. When assessing an employee's eligibility for sick pay, the amount of time they have had off over the previous 48 months will be taken into account.

Thames College of Professional Studies reserves the right to refuse to pay sick pay if it has reasonable cause to think that an employee is not genuinely sick, if it has cause to believe that an employee is abusing the sick pay scheme, if an employee has failed to comply with the notification requirements, or has not supplied the appropriate certification. If the sick pay scheme has been abused, disciplinary action may follow.

Payments of sick pay may be terminated, suspended or reduced if an employee fails to notify the College of relevant facts, or if their absence or continued absence is due to their taking an unwarranted risk (in or out of work), conducting themselves in a way that prejudices their recovery, abusing alcohol or drugs or other substances, or recklessly endangering the health and safety at work of themselves and others.

Leave Arrangements

Annual Leave

Employees of Thames College of Professional Studies whether part-time or full-time, are entitled to a minimum four weeks' paid annual leave. A week's leave allows you to be away from work for a week – that is the same amount of time as your working week. If you do a

five-day week, you are entitled to 28 days leave per year, if you do a four-day week the entitlement is 22.4 days leave etc. Your manager will let you know your annual leave entitlement for the current leave year.

Holidays must be agreed with your manager as early as possible. The College will where possible try to accommodate individual preferences for holiday dates but the needs of the business may have to take precedence, particularly where short or inadequate notice is given.

Thames College of Professional Studies also recognises the 8 statutory Bank Holidays form part of employees 28 day annual leave entitlement.

Maternity Leave and Pay Policy

Pregnant employees will be entitled to take 26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave and 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave, irrespective of their length of service or the number of hours worked each week. You may not return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth of your child.

You are free to chose when you would like your maternity leave to start, however, the earliest you can chose to start your maternity leave is during the 11th week before the expected week of your child's birth.

In certain circumstances, your maternity leave may start automatically earlier than the date you chose as the start date for your maternity leave. This applies where you are absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy at any time during the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth or if you give birth early.

If you have at least 26 weeks' service by the end of the 15th week before your child is expected to be born, you may be entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), provided your average weekly earnings are at or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance.

SMP is payable for 39 weeks. For the first six weeks, SMP will be paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings. For the remaining 33 weeks, SMP will be paid at the standard rate which is prescribed by regulations and is adjusted from time to time. The College will inform you of the applicable rate. If your average weekly earnings fall below the standard rate, SMP will be paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings throughout.

SMP will be paid subject to deductions for tax and National Insurance contributions in the normal way.

In order to be eligible for maternity leave and SMP, you are required to notify your line manager in writing by or during the 15th week before the expected week of your child's birth. You must inform your Line Manager of the following:

- you are pregnant

- the week in which your child is due
- the date you intended to start your maternity leave
- the date from which you will be claiming SMP

You should enclose a MAT B1 certificate with your written notification signed by your registered doctor or registered midwife to confirm the expected week of childbirth.

Within 28 days of receiving your notice, TCPS will notify you in writing of the date when your maternity leave will end.

You may change the date you start your maternity leave providing you give at least 28 days' notice in writing of either the new start date or the original start date (whichever is earliest).

Within 28 days of receiving your notice, the College shall notify you in writing of the date when your maternity leave will end.

Prior to your departure on maternity leave, your line manager will meet with you to discuss your rights and entitlements during maternity leave, the possibility of flexible working on your return to work and the level of contact you would like with the College during your maternity leave. You should feel free to raise at this meeting any queries or concerns you have.

Your line manager may also offer you up to 10 days work during your maternity leave. It is up to you if you wish to work these days. The rate of pay for the work will be agreed in advance with you. Your right to maternity leave and SMP will not be affected.

During Ordinary Maternity Leave, you will continue to receive your contractual benefits and your normal terms and conditions will continue to apply, except for those terms relating to wages and salary. You will continue to accrue holiday [but holiday must be taken in the year it is earned].

During Additional Maternity Leave, the rights and obligations under your contract of employment are reduced, but you must still give notice in accordance with your contract of employment if you want to leave. In addition, you will continue to be bound by your obligations of confidentiality and loyalty. Only statutory holiday will accrue.

If any pregnant employees, or employees who have recently become mothers or who are breastfeeding are employed in positions which have been identified as posing a risk to their health and safety or that of their baby they will be notified immediately and arrangements will be made to eliminate the risks.

If you have concerns about your own health and safety at any time you should consult your Line Manager immediately.

You do not have to notify TCPS separately of your return date. It will be assumed that you will come back to work on the date the College has notified you is the end of your maternity

leave period. However, if you wish to return to work before the end of your full maternity leave entitlement, you should give your line manager at least 8 weeks notice in writing of your intended return date.

If you return to work immediately after a period of Ordinary Maternity Leave you will return to work in the same job you left before you started your maternity leave.

If you return to work from a period of Additional Maternity Leave, you will return to the same job you were employed to do. If this is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a similar job on equally favourable terms and conditions.

If you decide not to return to work after maternity leave, you should confirm this in writing and give the notice required by your contract of employment.

On your return from maternity leave, your line manager will arrange a meeting with you to discuss any changes which have taken place during your absence. This will be an opportunity to discuss any issues relating to breastfeeding. You should also feel free to raise at this meeting any queries or concerns you have.

Paternity Leave and Pay

Statutory Paternity Leave is a maximum of two weeks' leave, following the birth of a child, taken in order to support the mother or care for the new child. It can be taken as a single week or two consecutive weeks. It cannot be taken as odd days or as two separate weeks.

Statutory Paternity Leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth. If the baby is born earlier than expected, it must be taken within 56 days from the date the baby was due.

To qualify you must have worked for the College for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected birth week.

Statutory Paternity Pay is paid at a fixed rate per week (determined in legislation) or 90% of average earnings if that is less. It is paid less tax and National Insurance contributions in the normal way.

During Statutory Paternity Leave, you are entitled to all of your normal contractual terms and conditions as if you were not absent, apart from basic wages and salary. You have the right to return to exactly the same job, on the same terms and conditions after Statutory Paternity Leave.

From 3rd April 2011, you may qualify for Additional Paternity Leave and Pay if either:

- you are the father of a child due on or after 3 April 2011
- your wife, partner or civil partner is pregnant and due to give birth to a child on or after 3 April 2011
- you and your partner receive notification that you are matched with a child for adoption on or after 3 April 2011

- your spouse, civil partner or partner (including same-sex relationships) is adopting a child from overseas and the child enters Great Britain on or after 3 April 2011
- Additional Paternity Leave is for a maximum of 26 weeks. If your partner has returned to work, the leave can be taken between 20 weeks and one year after your child is born or placed for adoption. You may be entitled to receive Additional Statutory Paternity Pay during your partner's Statutory Maternity Pay, Maternity Allowance or Adoption Pay period.

Additional Statutory Paternity Pay is paid if you either:

- take Additional Paternity Leave
- are not working for the purposes of caring for your child, during your partner's Statutory Maternity Pay, Maternity Allowance or Statutory Adoption Pay period

Parental Leave

An employee who has or expects to have responsibility for a child is entitled to take Parental Leave to care for that child. This includes the child's registered father or anyone else who has or expects to have formal parental responsibility for the child. To be eligible to take Parental Leave, an employee must have been employed by the College for at least one year. Both parents can take Parental Leave for each child they have who was born after 15th December 1999.

Parental Leave consists of 13 weeks' unpaid leave or 18 weeks' unpaid leave if the child is disabled. It can be taken at any time up to the child's fifth birthday or up to the child's 18th birthday if the child is disabled. Up to four weeks' Parental Leave can be taken in respect of each child, each year, in blocks of one week or more. Employees cannot take the leave in blocks of less than one week, unless the child is disabled. You must give your line manager at least 21 days notice of your intention to take Parental Leave.

Time Off For Dependants

You are legally entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off to deal with certain prescribed emergencies involving certain dependants. This leave is called Time Off for Dependants. Time Off for Dependants can be taken, for example, if a dependant falls ill or is injured, if care arrangements break down, or to arrange or attend a dependant's funeral. A dependant is your child (including adopted child), husband, wife or parent. It also includes someone who lives in your household, and someone who reasonably relies on you, such as an elderly relative. Any time taken off must be necessary and reasonable in the particular circumstances. Time Off for Dependants is not paid.

Health and Safety

Introduction

Thames College of Professional Studies recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer to maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and health of its employees, and of other persons who may be affected by its' activities.

It is your duty as an employee not to put at risks either yourself or others by your acts or omissions. You should also ensure that you are familiar with the College health and safety arrangements. Should you feel concern over any health and safety aspects of your work, this should be brought to the attention of your line manager immediately.

Procedure in the event of an accident

An Accident Book is available from your line manager and it is the responsibility of each individual employee to report and record any accident involving personal injury. Any accident or near miss occurrence (i.e. no one was injured but the incident had the potential to injure or kill) at work should be reported immediately to your line manager.

All employees who are absent from work following an accident must report to line manager which clearly states the nature and cause of the injury.

For any employee who suffers an injury at work which results in them being away from work, or unable to do their normal work, for three days or more (including weekends, rest days or holidays) it is important that your manager is informed.

First Aid

The College believes that best practice is to ensure staffs have access to a trained First Aider or Appointed Person. Details of these trained staff will be displayed on your local notice board or from your line manager and you should familiarise yourself with names and contact details.

Fire Safety

Employees should follow these steps to help prevent fires:

Before you use any electrical appliances carry out a quick check to make sure that the cables, plugs etc are not damaged.

Do not use any electrical equipment that shows signs of damage, even if you think it is only minor. Report any faults you find to your line manager and find an alternative appliance.

Ensure that you place your rubbish in the proper waste bins. Do not overfill the bins, and ensure that your waste bin is accessible to the cleaners.

Action to take when the fire alarm goes off:

Immediately stop what you are doing and walk (do not run) to the nearest available safe fire exit. If your nearest exit/route is obstructed, choose another route. Make sure that you are aware of the fire exits and routes in your area.

Follow the instructions of your designated Fire Warden.

Direction signs should indicate the route to your fire exit. These comprise a white arrow on a green background sometimes accompanied by the words 'FIRE EXIT' and also a pictogram of a running man. The arrows indicate the direction of the nearest fire exit.

Do not use a lift to leave the building - always use designated stairs.

Make your way to the appropriate assembly point.

Do not leave the designated assembly point, or attempt to re-enter the building, until you have been instructed to do so..

Action to take if you discover a fire:

RAISE THE ALARM! This can be achieved by breaking the glass on the call points or by shouting the instruction "Fire – call the fire brigade".

Raise the alarm even if you're building is fitted with an automatic fire alarm system, which has not yet activated - you must not wait for it to do so of its own accord. The alarm must be raised for every occurrence of a fire, no matter how small it appears to be. This will ensure that people in the building have adequate notice to evacuate should it begin to spread quickly. In addition, modern furnishings may allow the fire to develop unnoticed, so time is of the essence if everyone is to get out safely.

Call the fire brigade at the earliest available, and safe, opportunity and do not attempt to tackle the fire unless you have been appropriately trained and can safely do so e.g. a small fire in a waste paper basket. Unless you have been trained you could be putting yourself or somebody else at risk.

Personal Safety

Generally, you should try to avoid working alone whenever this is possible. However, if you have to work alone, then you need to develop an awareness of the risks and how to minimise them.

Prior to making an appointment with someone you do not know, obtain as much information as possible about the person you are meeting and arrange to meet the person in College premises. Always phone back the telephone number you have been given to confirm that it is legitimate. If a mobile number is given you should always ask for an alternative fixed line number.

If visiting, let your colleagues know where you are going, with whom and what time you are expecting to return. If you think that you are going to run over your original timescales, let your colleagues know.

If you are at all concerned that you are being placed in a dangerous situation through your employment, you must discuss this with your line manager.

Training and Development

Training and Development Policy

The College aims to provide training opportunities which will provide:

An induction programme which all staff will be required to undertake and will assist staff settling into their new role/job.

A progressive training and development scheme to enable staff to develop relevant skills and acquire knowledge to underpin their current role and career aspirations.

Personal Development Planning

Introduction

The College has a Personal Development Planning Scheme. The aims and purposes of the Scheme are:

To help managers and staff to make effective arrangements to identify and meet learning needs

To develop the skills, knowledge, values and behaviour that staff need to do their current jobs well.

Leaving Thames College of Professional Studies

Notice Periods

Unless your employment is terminated by agreement, or specified otherwise in your principal statement of terms and conditions, you or the College are required to give a period of notice in writing as follows:

One week's notice after one month's employment

Two weeks after two years

Three weeks after three years and so on up to 12 weeks maximum after 12 years or more.

If your employment is not terminated before you reach retirement age, your contract of employment will come to an end without the need for notice to be given by either party, and your employment will terminate automatically when you reach that age.

These periods of notice will apply if you are dismissed on grounds of inefficiency or if your dismissal is the result of disciplinary proceedings in circumstances where summary dismissal is not justified. Your employment may be terminated without notice where dismissal follows disciplinary proceedings.

Working Notice

In all cases TCPS reserves the right to enforce your full notice period. Your full remaining annual leave entitlement should be taken during your notice period in agreement with your line manager. Exceptionally, if this is not possible, your manager may agree to make a payment in lieu of this. If you leave any day other than the last working day of that month, that month will not count for annual leave purposes.

If you resign and are in possession of College property (including computer files), you should make your manager aware of these, and arrange how they will be handed back to the College. You remain bound by the confidentiality arrangements outlined in your contract of employment during this period.

In exceptional circumstances, if deemed appropriate and as an alternative to working your notice, the College reserves the right either to transfer you to other suitable duties during your notice period or to require you to accept payment in lieu of any entitlement to notice.

Other Conditions on Leaving

On leaving, the College will deduct from any money due to you such sums as you may owe to the College. These may include, but are not restricted to, any loans, relocation assistance, court orders and payment made for holidays taken in excess of entitlement.

If you leave without giving notice and without the College's agreement, you are in breach of your contract and you may forfeit some or all of any salary due to you.

Before leaving, you must hand over to your manager all articles belonging to Thames College of Professional Studies, including your ID badge and any documents, equipment and computer software used at home. Documents and software include (but are not limited to) correspondence, diaries, address books, databases, files, reports, plans, records or any other medium for storing information. You should not retain any copies, drafts, reproductions, extracts or summaries of documents and software.

After you have left the College, you must not:

- Solicit or seek to entice away any College staff
- Use or divulge to any person or organisation any confidential information relating to the business of Thames College of Professional Studies.

Should your employment be terminated following disciplinary action it is likely you will receive payment in lieu of notice. However, as there are numerous reasons as to why someone is dismissed, payment in lieu of notice will be reviewed on an individual basis taking into consideration the reasons behind the dismissal.

Should you be dismissed for reasons of gross misconduct, your employment will be terminated immediately without the benefit of notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Retirement

It is College policy that all employees should retire on attaining the default retirement age of 65 years. Exceptionally an extension beyond that age may be offered at the discretion of the Director and subject to medical clearance.

The government intends to begin to remove the default retirement age from April 2011. This will mean that most people can work beyond age 65 if they wish.

You should ensure that you inform your line manager at least 6 months before you are due to retire to ensure all appropriate arrangements are made (e.g. sourcing a replacement, mobilising your College pension etc.).

Thames College of Professional Studies

Appendix 1 Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

Disciplinary procedure

Scope

The TCPS Disciplinary Procedure will be used only when necessary and as a last resort. Where possible, informal and/or formal counselling or other good management practice will be used to resolve matters prior to any disciplinary action being taken. The procedure is intended to be positive rather than punitive but takes cognisance of the fact that sanctions may have to be applied in some circumstances.

An employee can discuss any part of this policy with Line Manager. They can help clarify employee's rights as well as give guidance and support where it may be needed. Every individual has the right to representation at any point during the disciplinary process.

Suspension

Suspension is not disciplinary action. The purpose of suspension is manifold and can be used when it is necessary to remove a member of staff from the workplace pending an investigation for example, to allow time for a 'cooling down period' for both parties, for their own or others protection, to prevent them influencing or being influenced by others or to prevent possible interference with evidence. Only the Manager in charge of that individual, at that time or their superior, has the authority to suspend an individual.

An employee suspended from duty will receive written confirmation within three days of:

The reason for the suspension

The date and time from which the suspension will operate.

The timescale of the ongoing investigation.

The right of appeal to the immediate manager of the suspending manager should the suspension last more than 7 days

Counselling

Counselling is an attempt to correct a situation and prevent it from getting worse without having to use the disciplinary procedure. Where improvement is required, the employee must be given clear guidelines as to:

what is expected in terms of improving shortcomings in conduct or performance

the time scales for improvement

when this will be reviewed

the employee must also be told, where appropriate, that failure to improve may result in formal disciplinary action.

A record of the counselling should be given to the employee and a copy retained in their personnel file. It is imperative that any counselling should be followed up and

improvements recognised and recorded. Once the counselling objectives have been met, any record of the counselling will be removed from the employees file.

If during counselling it becomes clear that the matter is more serious, then the discussion should be adjourned, and pursued under the formal disciplinary procedure.

Procedure for formal investigation

Formal investigations should be carried out by the most appropriate manager who is not directly involved with the incident being investigated. This manager may involve others to assist with the investigation process. All the relevant facts should be gathered promptly as soon as is practicable after the incident. Statements should be taken from witnesses at the earliest opportunity. Any physical evidence should be preserved and/or photographed if reasonable to do so.

A report should be prepared which outlines the facts of the case. This should be submitted to the appropriate senior manager / Director who will decide whether further action is required. Where appropriate, this report may be made available to the individual and their representative.

In most circumstances where misconduct or serious misconduct is suspected, it will be appropriate to set up an investigatory hearing. This would be chaired by the appropriate Senior Manager / Director, who would be accompanied by another manager. The investigating manager would be asked to present his/her findings in the presence of the employee who has been investigated. Witnesses should be called at this stage, and the employee allowed questioning these witnesses. The employee has a right of representation at this hearing.

Following the full presentation of the facts, and the opportunity afforded to the employee to state his side of the case, the hearing should be adjourned, and everyone would leave the room except the senior manager / Director hearing the case, and the other manager. They would discuss the case and decide which of the following option was appropriate:

1. Take no further action against the employee
2. Recommend counselling for the employee
3. Proceed to a disciplinary hearing

All parties should be brought back, and informed as to which option has been chosen.

Should the decision be taken to proceed to a disciplinary hearing, then this may follow on immediately from the investigatory hearing if the following criteria have been met:

The employee has been informed by letter that the investigation may turn into a disciplinary hearing, and that he has the right of representation. He has been told in advance what the nature of the complaint is, and had time to consult with a representative; all the facts have been produced at the investigatory hearing, and the manager / Director is in a position to decide on disciplinary action.

The manager should inform the employee and their representative that the hearing would now become a formal disciplinary hearing, and invite them to say anything further in relation to the case.

It may be appropriate at this point to adjourn proceedings, whilst necessary arrangements are made for a representative to attend the hearing at the request of the employee.

Should anyone who is subject to disciplinary action resign during the course of it, the action will cease unless there are extenuating circumstances which require it's continuance. The subject of the discipline may also request that the disciplinary action continue.

Warnings

Examples of Minor Misconduct

Below are listed examples of misconduct which may warrant either a Verbal Warning or a First Written Warning. It is stressed however that this list is not exhaustive and that on all occasions a full and proper investigation must take place prior to the issue of a warning.

Persistent lateness and poor time-keeping.

Absence from work, including going absent during work, without valid reason, notification or authorisation.

Smoking within unauthorised areas.

Failure to work in accordance with prescribed procedures.

Incompetence.

Unreasonable standards of dress or personal hygiene.

Failure to observe College regulations and procedures.

Verbal Warning

A Verbal Warning is appropriate when it is necessary for the manager in charge to take action against an employee for any minor failing or minor misconduct.

First Written Warning

A First Written Warning is appropriate when:

a verbal warning has not been heeded and the misconduct is either repeated or performance has not improved as previously agreed.

An offence is of a more serious nature for which a written warning is more appropriate.

The recurrence or accumulation of offence/offences, if left, will lead to more severe disciplinary action.

Example of Gross – Misconduct

Listed below are examples of misconduct which may be considered to be Gross Misconduct and may warrant a Final Warning, Demotion or Dismissal. It is stressed however that this list is not exhaustive and that on all occasions a full and proper investigation must take place prior to the issuing of a Final Warning, Demotion or Dismissal.

Theft, including unauthorised possession of College property.

Breaches of confidentiality, prejudicial to the interest of the College,

Being unfit for duty because of the misuse/consumption of drugs or alcohol.

Refusal to carry out a management instruction which is within the individual's capability and which would be seen to be in the interests of the College.

Breach of confidentiality / security procedures.

Bribing or attempting to bribe another individual, or personally taking or knowingly allowing another person to take a bribe;

Physical assault, breach of the peace or verbal abuse.

False declaration of qualifications or professional registration.
Failure to observe College rules, regulations or procedures.
Wilful damage of property at work.
Incompetence or failure to apply sound professional judgement.

Final Written Warning

A Final Written Warning is appropriate when:
An employee's offence is of a serious nature falling just short of one justifying dismissal.
An employee persists in the misconduct which previously warranted a lesser warning.

Downgrading or Transfer to another Post

This action is appropriate when:
Previous attempts, via the disciplinary procedure, to rectify a problem have failed and this is a final attempt to solve a problem without having to dismiss an employee.
An employee is considered by the Manager of the department to be incompetent or otherwise unfit to fulfil the duties for which he is employed but where dismissal is not thought to be appropriate.

Dismissal

Dismissal is appropriate when
An employee's behaviour is considered to be Gross Misconduct.
An employee's misconduct has persisted, exhausting all other lines of disciplinary procedure.

Time Scales for the expiry of Warnings

Warnings issued to employees shall be deemed to have expired after the following periods of time.
Verbal Warnings: 6 months
First Written Warnings: 12 months
Final Written Warnings: 18 months (or as agreed and recorded at the hearing)

These time scales remain provided that during that period, no further warnings have been issued in respect of the employee's conduct.

Letter of warning

All Warnings must contain the following information:
The letter must be issued within 7 days of the date of the disciplinary hearing.
The nature of the offence and where appropriate, that if further misconduct occurs, more severe disciplinary action will be taken.
The period of time given to the employee for improvement.
The employee's right to appeal to the manager directly above that of the one issuing the warning.
A copy of the warning and any supporting documentation must be attached to the individual's personnel file.

The employee must also receive a copy of the warning which in the case of any written warning will be sent to their home address by recorded delivery if not handed to them in person.

In the case of a final written warning, reference must be made to the fact that any further misconduct will lead to dismissal, and that the employee has the right of appeal, and to who they can make that appeal.

The letter confirming dismissal will contain the following information:

- The reason for dismissal and any administrative matter arising from the termination of their employment.
- The employees right of appeal and to whom they should make that appeal

Appeals

Every employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary hearing. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

- That the College's' Procedure had not been followed correctly.
- That the resulting disciplinary action was inappropriate.
- That the need for disciplinary action was not warranted.
- That new information regarding disciplinary action, has arisen.

An appeal should be put in writing to the Personnel Department / Chief Executive. The letter of appeal may be constructed by the employee or their representative. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within 10 days of receipt of the warning / dismissal letter.

An appeal will be arranged within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal letter.

Appeals against Verbal and First Warnings

In the case of verbal and first warnings, the appeal will be heard by the manager next in line to the one who issued the warning.

Appeals against Downgrading, Final Warnings and Dismissal

The hearing and determining of appeals against final warnings and dismissal will be heard by the appropriate Director or Chief Executive. They may also involve another senior manager / Director not previously involved with the case.

When dealing with an appeal against a Final Warning or Dismissal written statements of case may be submitted no later than 2 days prior to the date of Appeal Hearing. No additional written evidence will be admitted by the Appeal Committee on the date of the Hearing.

Witnesses may be required by either party at an appeal hearing, dependent upon the circumstances and nature of the case. However, there is no specific obligation on either

party to produce a witness. Either party must give 5 days prior notice that they intend to call specific persons involved or associated with the case under consideration. It is the responsibility of the management representative and for the appellant to each arrange for the availability and attendance of any witness they wish to call.

Grievance procedure

The grievance procedure is intended as the tool by which a member of staff may formally have a grievance, regarding any condition of their employment, heard by the management of the College. The aggrieved employee has the right to representation by a Trade Union Representative, a professional organisation, a staff association or a colleague/friend.

In the event of a member of staff wishing to raise a grievance, it is preferable for the grievance to be satisfactorily resolved as close to the individual and their line manager as possible. It is understood however that this is not always possible and that a formal procedure is required to ensure the swift and fair resolution of matters which aggrieve the hospital's employees.

Time scales have been fixed to ensure that grievances are dealt with quickly, however these may be extended if it is agreed upon by both parties.

This procedure is not intended to deal with:

1. Dismissal or disciplinary matters which are dealt with in a separate procedure.
2. Disputes, which are of a collective nature and which are dealt with in a separate procedure.

Stage 1

An employee who has a grievance, should raise the matter with his manager immediately either verbally or in writing. If the matter itself concerns the employee's immediate manager, then the grievance should be taken to their superior.

If the manager is unable to resolve the matter at that time then a formal written grievance form should be submitted (see appendix a). The manager should then respond within **2 working days** (i.e. the manager's normal working days) to the grievance unless an extended period of time is agreed upon by both parties. The response will give a full written explanation of the manager's decision and who to appeal to if still aggrieved.

Stage 2

In most instances the College would expect the manager's decision to be final and for the matter to come to a close. However, in some circumstances the employee may remain aggrieved and can appeal against the decision of the manager concerned.

The appeal, to the manager next in line, must be made within ten working days of the original response to the employee's grievance. The appeal must be in writing (see appendix b) and contain the original formal Grievance form. This manager will attempt to resolve the

grievance. A formal response and full explanation will be give in writing, as will the name of the person to whom they can appeal if still aggrieved, **within 7 days**.

Where the 'next in line' manager at this stage is the Director with responsibility for the employees function, then the grievance should immediately progress to stage 3.

Stage 3

If the employee remains aggrieved there will be a final level of appeal to the Director responsible for the employees function. This appeal must be made in writing (see appendix c), enclosing a copy of the original Formal Grievance form, to the director within ten working days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. This Director will arrange and hear the appeal with another management representative and respond formally with a full explanation **within 20 working days**.

Where a grievance is raised against a Director then the grievance will be heard by another director.

There is no further right of appeal. Where however **both** parties agree that there would be some merit in referring the matter to a third party for advice, conciliation or arbitration, arrangements will then be made to find a mutually acceptable third party.

Thames College of Professional Studies

Appendix b - Grievance Procedure

To:	
From:	
Dept:	
Date:	
Immediate Superior:	

Dear

On * _____ (within 10 days of the response to the initial formal grievance)

my grievance against _____

was heard by _____

I am not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting and would like to appeal to yourself for a further hearing of my grievance, in line with the College Grievance Procedure.

I enclose a copy of the original letter regarding this matter and other correspondence and information related to it.

Yours sincerely,

(Manager should respond to this formal written grievance within 7 days unless an extended period for response is mutually agreed)

Thames College of Professional Studies

Appendix c - Grievance Procedure

To (Director):	
From:	
Dept:	
Date:	
Immediate Superior:	

Dear

On * _____ (within 10 days of the response to the second stage of the formal grievance)

I appealed to _____

against the decision made at my initial grievance against

I remain dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting and would like to appeal to you for a further hearing of my grievance, in line with the College Grievance Procedure.

I enclose a copy of the original letter regarding this matter and other correspondence and information related to it.

Yours sincerely,

(Director should respond to this formal written grievance within 20 working days unless an extended period for response is mutually agreed)

Thames College of Professional Studies

Appendix 3 - Confirmation of Receipt of Handbook Form

Name:	
Designation:	
Place of Work:	
Line Manager:	

I confirm I have received a copy of the Thames College of Professional Studies Staff Handbook and that I have read this and understood the contents.

I also confirm that I have sought clarification from my line manager on any issues outlined in the Handbook which I am not clear about.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please return this form duly completed and signed to your line manager.