

2011  
2012

TCPS

# THAMES COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

**[STUDENT HANDBOOK]**

The Student Handbook provides a summary of policies, benefits and guidelines






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| September |    |    |    |    |    |    | October |    |    |    |    |    |    | November |    |    |    |    |    |    | December |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su        | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su      | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su       | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su       | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
|           |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  |         |    |    |    |    | 1  |    |          | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |    |          |    | 1  | 2  | 3  |    |    |
| 4         | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 2       | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 6        | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 4        | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |
| 11        | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 9       | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 13       | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 11       | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18        | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 16      | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 20       | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 18       | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25        | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 23 | 24      | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 27 | 28       | 29 | 30 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29       | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |    |
|           |    |    |    |    |    |    | 30      | 31 |    |    |    |    |    |          |    |    |    |    |    |    |          |    |    |    |    |    |    |

| Observances:  |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
|  | Term Time      |    |
|  | Induction Week |    |
|   |                | Half Term Break   |
|   |                | Assignment Submission & Exam Weeks  |
|   |                |  |
|   |                | Term Break  |

| Public Holidays: |                     |                        |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Jan 3</b>     | New Year's Day      | <b>Apr 22</b>          |
| <b>Apr 29</b>    | Royal wedding       | Good Friday            |
| <b>Aug 29</b>    | Summer Bank Holiday | <b>May 2</b>           |
|                  |                     | Early May Bank Holiday |
|                  |                     | <b>Dec 26</b>          |
|                  |                     | Christmas Day          |
|                  |                     | <b>Apr 25</b>          |
|                  |                     | Easter Monday          |
|                  |                     | <b>May 30</b>          |
|                  |                     | Spring Bank Holiday    |
|                  |                     | <b>Dec 27</b>          |
|                  |                     | Boxing Day             |

**TCPS calendar 2012**

**2012 Calendar**

| January |    |    |    |    |    |    | February |    |    |    |    |    |    | March |    |    |    |    |    |    | April |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su      | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su       | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su    | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su    | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
| 1       | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |          |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  |       |    |    |    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 1     | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| 8       | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 5        | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 4     | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 8     | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15      | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 12       | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 11    | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 15    | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22      | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 19       | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 18    | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 22    | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29      | 30 | 31 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 25       | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 29    | 30 |    |    |    |    |    |       |    |    |    |    |    |    |



## **Results Dates**

Results dates will be published on college notice board and Guidance will be available on all these dates.

## **Assessment including examinations**

Assessment Malpractice: Plagiarism, Cheating and Copying Plagiarism means copying from published sources (including the internet) without acknowledgement. Cheating includes copying the work from others, or getting someone else to do the work for you. Copying includes allowing your work to be copied by others. You must ensure that all the work that is produced in assignments is your own. Work must not be copied from other students, or from any other person. You must not produce assignment work in collaboration with other students, unless this is allowed as part of the assignment and clearly indicated by the lecturer. Quotations from published sources (including books, newspapers, magazines or the internet) must be clearly indicated in the assignment. All cases of suspected plagiarism, cheating or copying will be investigated and, if proven, the student will be subject to the College's disciplinary procedure. Awarding bodies may also impose their own sanctions and penalties, including disqualification.

## **Registration and Fees**

You will be responsible to meet your examination and Awarding body registration fees. Late examination entries, or changes in your entry, may result in an extra charge.

Examinations information is also available on the College notice boards. It is your responsibility to check for examination clashes and then inform the college.

## **Special Examination Arrangements**

If you need any special arrangements for your examinations, (e.g. extra time) let your Personal Tutor know at the start of your course. All requests for special arrangements must come through the Head of Learner Services.

## **Complaints**

Complaints should first be discussed with your Personal Tutor and/or the Head of the Faculty area concerned. If you are not satisfied with the response, and wish to make a formal complaint, please complete a complaint form. Complaint forms are available at reception desk.

## **Data protection**

While you are at college, we will collect various pieces of personal data about you, all of which are necessary to meet UKBA requirements, for the analysis of statistical data, or for health and safety reasons. The College is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. The College's Data Protection statement is printed on the enrolment form and on the back of your enrolment receipt.

## **Equality & diversity**

We celebrate the diversity of people who learn and work in the College. We are opposed to any harassment or discrimination arising from race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, disability, religion, faith and class. We will challenge any inappropriate behaviour or attitudes and will take positive action to promote good race relations and prevent any gender or disability or inequality.

## **Guidance and counselling**

### **Tutorials**

Your Personal Tutor will:

- Discuss, with you, how you are getting on with your studies, help you review your academic and personal targets and plan what you need to do to achieve your best
- Guide you to people who can help if you have any personal, family or money problems
- Help you plan your future

### **Learning support**

Learner Services is based in college and provides a support service for all students. The main aims of the service are to provide, where appropriate:

- On course support
- Individual support
- Specialist support – assessments, equipment, assistive technology etc

## **Personal**

### **Lost Property**

If you find anything, please hand it to the Receptionist on duty, in the main reception area. Thames College of Professional Studies cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage to students' property, including vehicles or bicycles. At no time should personal items be left unattended in unlocked classrooms/workshops, lounges or any other areas of the college.

### **Mobile Phones**

These must be switched off when you are in a classroom or workshop. No mobile phones should be taken into an examination room as this is against awarding body regulations. There are a number of designated areas where mobile phones can be used.

### **Student advice**

The College has a Student Advice Committee. Please contact the concerned person as follow:

Management: Ms. Rasaf Khan

Academics: Mr. Zubair

Guidance & advice: Mr. Aqeel Ansari

Career counselling: Ms. Grishma Shah

Student welfare & IT assistance: Mr. Rasaf Khan

## **Student liaison team**

Members of the Student Liaison Team are available throughout the College day. Their role is to help students with any issues that they have whilst at the College, as well as supporting student activities. The Student Liaison officer is available via reception desk.

## **Travel to TCPS**

### **Assistance with Travel:**

You will be eligible for assistance with travel if you live in Birmingham and if you are studying full-time.

## **Career guidance, job search and higher education advice**

Guidance interviews are available by appointment only via reception desk

### **Who are the advice and guidance team?**

We have a team of Careers Advisers available to help you:

- Consider your career plans
- Decide on your further education choices
- Plan and complete application forms, CVs and personal statements
- Prepare for employment

## **Careers service**

### **Who can advise me on Higher Education applications?**

- The College Careers Advisers

## **Equality**

### **What does equality mean?**

Everyone is entitled to receive support to achieve their potential regardless of their age, ethnic background, disability, gender, religion, sexuality or social grouping. You are entitled to be treated with respect and in return, are expected to respect others.

## **Policy statement**

The College supports and promotes the principle of equality of opportunity in all aspects of its work. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that all applicants and students are treated equally and fairly, irrespective of age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, nationality, culture and religion or belief. Equality means saying no to bullying. If you are picked on by others (students or staff) in any way – for example: hurtful name-calling, or jokes, unwanted physical contact, threats, texts or emails – seek help. Tell your tutor or lecturers about it.

## **Equal opportunities**

There are two policies on Equal Opportunities:

- Equal Opportunities Policy for students
- Race Equality Policy

## **Equality and fairness**

Equality is about treating everyone fairly by giving them an equal chance to succeed. This does not mean treating everyone the same, because some people need more support if they are going to be able to study. If a student is worried about family or money problems he or she may need support from Counselling or Welfare staff. Someone with a disability may need to have specialist equipment for a support worker in order to study.

## **Diversity and respect**

Diversity is about recognising that we are all different and respecting each person as an individual, regardless of their: Age, Gender, Disability or learning difficulty, Religion or belief, Race, ethnic origin, nationality and Sexual orientation.

Some of the differences between us are obvious, for example the colour of our skin or a visible disability. Some are not visible – it can be difficult to tell whether someone is a Christian or whether they have a mental health illness simply by looking at them. These differences mean that each of us can make our own unique contribution to College life.

## **Harassment and bullying**

Sometimes people reject those they see as ‘different’ and treat them unfairly and with disrespect. The College will not tolerate bullying and is prepared to take disciplinary action. If you are bullied or witness someone being bullied, talk to your tutor or one of the Counsellors immediately. To find more information on how the College deals with bullying see Student Harassment and Bullying Policy available on request from reception.

## **Counselling**

There is a College Counsellor available if you would like someone to talk to about anything which concerns you, whether it is to do with college, friends, and work, personal or home life. Counselling offers a safe, informal place where you can talk freely and in confidence in a way that is not always possible with friends, family or tutors. If a Counsellor is free, you

may be able to talk straight away. Alternatively, you can make an appointment which can last up to 50 minutes. To make an appointment with a counsellor simply contact the reception.

### **Learning resource centre**

The Learning Resource Centre is open for all students to use, based within the college and contains IT based resources, plus study areas and computer drop-in facilities. The area is for quiet study; please respect the needs of your fellow students. You are responsible for all items borrowed. Materials on loan should be returned promptly as others may wish to use them. You will be charged fines if resources are returned late. Your account will be suspended if you fail to respond to reminder letters.

### **Opening hours**

9.00 am - 5.30 pm Mon - Thurs

10.00 am - 4.00 pm Fri

### **Health, safety and security**

The health and safety of learners is of fundamental value to the College. We believe that learners are entitled to learning that takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. In addition, we consider that safe learning is essential to maximise learners' experience and achievement. You are required to follow all safety rules. Please help us by identifying and reporting any safety hazards immediately to a member of college staff.

### **Health, safety and security student guide to health and safety**

A full student guide to Health and Safety can be at reception desk. You will need to read this because Lecturers will refer to it in lessons.

### **First aid**

First Aider officer is qualified with first Aid practices who can administer simple medical help. If you require first aid assistance, contact the receptionist. If no First Aider is available within the college then call 999 for emergency services and ask for advice. If you require hospital treatment, transportation will be arranged and your next of kin informed. It will be their responsibility to arrange for your collection from hospital and transport home.

### **Emergencies:**

Contact 999 in case of emergency or serious incident.

### **Fire drill**

- The fire alarm is given by the continuous ringing of the fire bell/siren
- When the alarm sounds you should immediately evacuate the building. If you have difficulty in evacuating unaided, you will be given special instructions
- Close doors behind you

- Do not use lift
- Assemble at the designated assembly point
- Keep well clear of the buildings and access route for emergency vehicles
- Do not re-enter the building until authorised to do so by the Duty Manager
- Practice fire drills will be held throughout the year

## **Smoking**

Thames College of Professional Studies is a non smoking campus. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on site.

## **College computer facilities**

The College has computer facilities on the campus. As a student in college you may use any of the machines on College network. However, do remember to obtain a USB “pen” drive on which to back up any important work or assignments. The College currently uses Microsoft Windows 7 and Office 2007 on all machines. Special email and “quick browser” computer terminals are available on all computers. These should be used if you need to send or read an email or look up a page on the Web.

## **Using the college computer network**

You will first be shown how to use your account, after you have confirmed that you accept our “Code of Practice for Acceptable Use of IT/Computer Facilities”. A copy of the Code can be found at the reception desk. Students are given their account details at enrolment. All students have the same access rights.

## **Monitoring network activity**

You should be aware that all network activity is monitored by our technical staff. Under certain circumstances, for reasons of security, your network files, internet access, browsing and email may be intercepted or viewed. The College uses automated antivirus checking on all incoming web pages and emails.

## **Policies and procedures**

The College has different policies which students must abide by at all times:

### **Student attendance and absence policy**

All students are expected to maintain excellent attendance in all classes including Tutorials, and to be able to provide valid reasons for all absences. Thames College of professional studies strictly follows UK Border Agency attendance rules and regulations and expects the students to follow the same.

## **Definition of Absence**

There are two categories of absence – authorised and unauthorised. Initially, all absences will be considered as ‘unauthorised’. In a limited number of cases, absences can be changed from ‘unauthorised’ to ‘authorise’. Generally, illness is NOT a reason for authorising absence. Work experience, attendance at examinations and educational visits organised by the College will be counted as ‘Present’.

## **Authorised Absence**

The following categories may be counted as authorised absence:

- Medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside class time and if notified in advance: evidence such as appointment card/letter required.
- Emergency medical appointments: evidence required, e.g. card confirming appointment.
- Care of family member for whom the student has caring responsibilities if notified in advance.
- Emergency care of family member for whom the student has caring responsibilities, with no prior notification.
- A religious holiday if notified in advance.
- University visit or career / job interview if notified in advance. Evidence is required.
- Occasional extra-curricular activity at significant level, e.g. regional /national, if notified in advance. Evidence is required.
- Attendance at a funeral if notified in advance,
- Attendance at a probation meeting if notified in advance
- Driving test if notified in advance (copy of test letter required)
- Disruption to mode of transport where there is no alternative arrangement, if student lives more than 3 miles away.
- Absence that is the consequence of disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act. Lateness if there is a valid reason.

For absence to be approved as ‘authorised’, the student must complete a ‘Application for leave’ form in advance (if advanced notification is required, as stated above) or within five working days of returning to college. All ‘Application for leave’ forms, plus a letter from parent/guardian or other evidence, must be handed in to the reception. Authorised absence will count as ‘present’ when student attendance percentages are calculated.

## **Unauthorized Absence:**

The following reasons are not considered valid for the purposes of authorising absence. This list is not exhaustive.

Holidays during term time; job commitments; leisure activities; family and other celebrations such as birthdays and weddings; babysitting; shopping; driving lessons; regular medical appointments, e.g. dental check-ups and eye appointments; illness. If the level of attendance falls below 85%, then the Personal Tutor will arrange for the student to be interviewed by the Course Coordinator who will determine further action and monitor future attendance.

## **Lateness**

Students are expected to arrive promptly for all classes. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes after the start and who are thereby given an 'unauthorised absence' for that session, may complete a 'Application for leave. If there is a genuine reason for lateness, the absence can be considered for alteration to authorised absence.

## **Appeals**

Students who wish to appeal against a decision regarding attendance marks may do so in writing to the Director: Administration within ten days of the notification of decision, giving reasons.

## **Student disciplinary code**

The College has a full Student Disciplinary code which is available from your tutor on request. The Disciplinary code applies to all students of the College, on work placement or on college trips. Depending on the circumstances, the disciplinary process may commence at any stage.

## **The Stages in the Student Disciplinary Code**

**(a) Informal Stage** – with any member of staff – may involve Personal Tutor

**(b) Formal Procedures**

**Stage 1** – Official verbal warning With Personal Tutor

**Stage 2** – Formal interview With Head of Curriculum Area

**Stage 3** – Formal interview With Head of Faculty

Recommendation ratified by Director of Curriculum Support If these results in expulsion or withdrawal from a course; you have a right to Appeal to the Principal.

## **Management of student assignments policy**

The College believes that successful completion of a course requires keeping up to date with all aspects of study, particularly assignment work. It further believes that falling behind with assignments can be a source of stress leading to ill health and poor attendance. However, the best way to avoid assignment stress is to keep up to date. This policy is to clarify the regulations regarding the timely handing in of coursework and other assignments and details the events should a student fall behind with their work. This applies to all students on all courses containing coursework assignments. It refers to the completion of assignments only. For the College's policy regarding plagiarism or other assignment related disciplinary

matters please see the College's Student Disciplinary Code. The College has a full Management of Student Assignments Policy which is available from your tutor on request.

### **Academic appeals**

If you feel you have grounds for appeal:

- Appeals against external tests or exams must be made through the College Examination Office. The appeal will require the signed support of the Course Coordinator.
- Appeals against internal assessment grades – follow the College Academic Appeals Policy which can be obtained through your tutor or Course Coordinator or through the Director.
- Where an awarding body has an appeals procedure for internal assessments, your Personal Tutor will inform you of your rights.

### **Code of practice for acceptable use of IT / computing facilities**

You should be aware that all college systems are monitored from time to time, and your login and activity is recorded. The information is used to help to improve the system and to ensure that it is used for its intended purpose. Web activity can be traced back to your network user account.

### **Complaints procedure**

Thames College of Professional Studies encourages complaints, comments and compliments by advertising our procedures and making them easy to use. This is an important part of our customer care for it shows that we value the views of our users and that we are concerned about the services we provide and we also continuously try to improve it. College staff will try to solve any problem informally. If at any time you are not satisfied with the way the problem is being dealt with, you should contact Mr. Aqeel Ansari at the College on 0121 616 1111 to make a formal complaint. A complaint must be made within three months of the event that gave rise to it or, if the complainant is a student of the College, within three months of the end of the course, whichever is the later. The College may extend this time limit if it would have been unreasonable for the complaint to be made earlier or there were extenuating circumstances which prevented the complainant from making the complaint earlier, as long as it is still possible to investigate the facts of the case.

If you are making a complaint, we would like you to complete a complaint form:

- Giving us your name, address and appropriate telephone numbers
- Explaining exactly what you are dissatisfied with

If you would like help in completing the complaint form, you can telephone Mr. Aqeel Ansari at the College on 0121 616 1777, who will arrange for appropriate assistance. If you wish, you can ask someone to handle your complaint on your behalf. This can be a relative, friend or nominee. We place great importance on keeping your affairs confidential. Because of this, if you want someone to handle your complaint for you, please let us know this in writing. We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within 5 working days of receiving it. If your complaint is about a member of the College Staff, it will be dealt with by the Principal. In other cases, your complaint will be investigated by a member of the College

management and you will receive a response to the complaint within 15 working days of our acknowledgement. If we cannot do this within this period, we will let you know the reasons why and our estimated timescale as to when we are able to respond.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, a review by the Course Coordinator can be requested. The result of the review will be communicated within 5 working days. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response by the Course Coordinator a review by the Principal can be requested. The result of the review will be communicated within 5 working days. Principal's decision will be final.

When we respond we will let you know what action we can offer and notify you of any improvements made as a result of your complaint.