

Monday, April 12, 2021

Dear Sirs and Madam

Thank you for your letter dated 3 March 2021.

The University of Law takes matters of free speech and student welfare extremely seriously. The recent revisions to our Student Discipline Regulations (Document Q9.3.4) to include the section titled *Evidence and Supporting Documentation* were made with these principles in mind.

In your letter you mention the Department for Education command paper titled *Higher Education: Free speech and academic freedom*. You quote the following statement from the paper: “*The HEP should not encourage students to inform upon other students for lawful free speech, nor should they pay, or otherwise reward students for doing so*”. The key point of your letter is to suggest that the section titled *Evidence and Supporting Documentation* in our Student Discipline Regulations contravenes this statement.

We are of course aware of the command paper and, to address your point, our Student Discipline Regulations do not contravene the above quoted statement. The content of the section titled *Evidence and Supporting Documentation* was not designed to either encourage or discourage students so informing upon one another. It was designed as a fair procedure as necessary to protect the student bringing information to our attention. We acknowledge that anonymity in these circumstances could present a risk to the student who is the subject of a possible disciplinary process. As such we consider any information brought to our attention alongside a consideration of our commitment to zero tolerance of any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation (as set out in our newly introduced Dignity at Work and Study Policy). This approach ensures both students are protected. Equally, the revised Student Disciplinary Regulations have not had the practical effect of encouraging or discouraging students informing upon one another. There has been no change as to the frequency of these types of reports to the University since the revised regulations were introduced.

We regularly review and revise our policies and regulations as necessary to accommodate changes in law and practice. We will continue to do so and are ready to make any changes we consider necessary to our Student Disciplinary Regulations as the legal and social landscape of free speech evolves.

Yours sincerely,

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