

Annex C: Template for producing a self-assessment on guidance on consumer protection law

Provider's name: South Shields Marine School

Provider's UKPRN: 10091552

Your overall approach to ensuring compliance with consumer protection law

South Shields Marine School (SSMS) is fully conversant with, and adherent to, consumer protection law. SSMS believes this to be evidenced through the recognition that in all of its dealings in matters concerning student support, cognisance is given to the *CMA UK Higher Education Providers – Advice on Consumer Protection Law (2015)* and the accompanying *CMA Higher Education Undergraduate Students: your rights under consumer law (2015)* in order to ensure compliance with the SSMS's obligations. Furthermore, SSMS takes legal advice from its retained legal advisors when developing new contracts and considering changes to terms and conditions, thereby ensuring that the formal contracts and information provided to students is current, and protects their rights as consumers.

Whilst all staff are required to have an operational awareness, responsibility for consumer law issues rests with the Principal and the Marine Assistant Principals. Students Services Team Leaders are instrumental in ensuring operational conformance in their interactions with prospective and current students.

SSMS's Senior Management Team and the SSMS board as relevant, formally consider and ultimately approve all policies and procedures relating to student admissions, appeals and complaints, all of which are underpinned by the guidance as indicated above. These policies are placed on the SSMS website; consequently, they are available to staff and (prospective) students as a reference to ensure consistency in their application. Subject to annual review, these policies are also impact assessed to ensure that all elements of equality strands are considered.

Your approach to providing information to applicants and students: research and application stage, offer stage and enrolment stage

SSMS publishes its Higher Education courses on-line, within the range of course provision, examples of which are

[FDSc Marine Operations - Merchant Navy Deck Officer Trainee Scheme | South Tyneside College \(stc.ac.uk\)](http://stc.ac.uk)

[Foundation Degree in Marine Engineering | South Tyneside College \(stc.ac.uk\)](http://stc.ac.uk)

Each specific course links provides guidance on:

- Entry requirements
- Course assessment
- Professional progression
- Financial information and fees, with additional support information on the SSMS's websites.

Student applications are tracked, and should the need arise, prospective students are contacted to apprise them of any changes to the pre-contract information which may materially affect their decision to complete the registration process. As part of the initial advice and guidance, prospective students are

provided with information on complaints handling, and any cancellation rights. During such consultations, SSMS's terms and conditions, including any rules and regulations that students are bound by are formally discussed. Such information is also an integral component of the Induction programme and, indeed, student forums.

Website information is checked and updated each year, and in-year changes are undertaken when incorrect information or when a student forum indicate that the information provided does not meet their needs.

Your contract terms and conditions

All students receive a formal offer letter from SSMS, which identifies the major elements of their offer:

With regard to your application for a place on the << insert course of study>>, I am pleased to offer you a conditional place on the programme.

Your offer is subject to you paying course fees of £6165 as per below*:

Offer details

Your chosen programme details are:

Programme Title	
Awarding Body	
Semester dates	
Tuition Fee	£6165

In order to help ensure that your student experience is maintained at your expectation, South Shields Marine School has a minimum number of admissions in each programme for each year. In the event that this minimum is not reached, the school reserves the right to close this programme and withdraw offers made on it. If the programme is closed, the school will use reasonable endeavours to help all affected students to switch to a suitable alternative programme or alternative HE provider if they wish to do so

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact <<insert relevant email address>>

If you require accommodation you should contact the college accommodation office. Please see <http://www.stc.ac.uk/page/halls-residence> for details.

Yours sincerely

Natalie Todd
Administration Coordinator
South Shields Marine School

Your complaint handling processes and practices

SSMS has specific complaint processes that are provided to students via both their own specific Course Handbooks, and also the SSMS websites, <http://www.stc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-04/Complaints%20Policy.pdf> .

The Policy identifies that complaints are:

- Treated seriously and in an open manner
- Acknowledged immediately, preferably in writing
- Investigated
- Resolved, wherever that is reasonably practicable, within no longer than 13 working weeks
- Used as feedback to improve the service which the SSMS offers

The Complaint policy has four distinct stages, whereby the SSMS tries to resolve all complaints within the second stage where the investigating officer will respond within one week.

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the internal review processes, then they can escalate the complaint externally to Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

All complaints are reported to the Governing Board each term, so that they can monitor any level of student dissatisfaction.