

## **UUK/GUILD HE CODE OF PRACTICE**

### **GOVERNANCE BOARD**

**20th July 2009**

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## **DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AUDIT PROCESS**

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### **Background**

In February 2006 University UK (UUK) and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP - now Guild HE) released a Code of Practice for the Management of Student Housing ("the Code"). The Code outlines best practice and provides bench marks for the management - and quality - of student housing in the sector. In addition, it is intended to serve as one of the approved codes of practice for HE "managed and controlled" accommodation under the Housing Act 2004. This Act introduced a system of licensing for houses in multiple occupation, from which accommodation managed or controlled by higher or further education establishments may be accepted, if managed in conformity with the approved code of practice.

Institutions who have signed up to the Code are required to review the management of student accommodation as part of the three yearly internal audit plan. Under the terms of the Code, each institution is required to provide summary information to the UUK/Guild HE Code Governance Board, including the relevant sections of auditors' reports, management's response and the timescale for addressing auditors' recommendations.

### **Audit Approach**

The audit work will normally consist of face-to-face interviews and review of documentation. It is recommended that auditors meet with the student representative body of the institution to gain feedback on their perceptions of how the code is being promoted, adhered to and monitored. Auditors will also undertake testing as necessary to verify their findings, dependant on the outcome of our initial discussions with managers. Site visits to establishments will be planned into the audit process. A guidance self assessment checklist has been developed to assist auditors in the compliance assessment. The template covers both mandatory and non mandatory elements. This will assist the sector in providing benchmarking opportunities and the identification of best practice.

The Governance Board of the CoP has agreed that audits must take place every three years as a minimum requirement. The intervening year's audits focusing on checking the implementation of the audit recommendations, management action

plans and a review of the outcomes achieved from any significant student complaints.

## Objectives

The audit will focus on the managerial systems and processes in place within the institution based upon the current version of the Code. The auditors' review will seek to assess whether:

- The institution is in compliance with the mandatory elements of the Code
- The institution follows good management practice in respect of its student housing, in accordance with the desirable elements of the Code.

The audit will focus on compliance with the UUK Code of Practice and will involve consideration of the following objectives:

<b>Detailed Objective</b>	<b>Description</b>
The institutions' student accommodation meets relevant health and safety standards and procedures.	Auditors must consider arrangements to ensure the institutions student accommodation and its contents is compliant with relevant health and safety standards and procedures. Auditors will perform compliance testing to confirm the effectiveness of the controls in place.
The institutions' maintains and repairs student accommodation to an appropriate standard	Auditor's will consider arrangements for the maintenance of and repair to student accommodation with a focus on the processes and systems in place. They will review arrangements for monitoring the condition of assets and perform compliance testing to confirm the effectiveness of the controls in place.
Evidence that the residential estate is included in the institutions environmental policies and strategies.	Evidence that the students are engaged in and or communicated with, on sustainability issues and references made in the auditors report on any notable practices
The institution has established and properly discharged contractual responsibilities as a landlord.	Auditors will review how the institution informs students of their responsibilities as tenants and consider through compliance testing whether contractual responsibilities have been properly discharged.
Support services for students in the institutions registered accommodation are in line with the CoP	Auditors will review the access arrangements for support services that can be used by students and consider the adequacy of the arrangements in place to provide these where needed. These should comply with the institutions policies on equality and diversity a useful benchmark for this is the "Handbook for Student Accommodation Providers on Support and Guidance for Equality and Diversity" published by the Equality Challenge Unit.

Anti-social behaviour and disciplinary problems at the establishment(s) are fully addressed.	Auditors will review the institutions' policy with regard to student behaviour, and gain an understanding of processes in place to communicate this to the student body.
Student complaints process is communicated to customers and actively promoted.	The process for dealing with student complaints is communicated to customers and effective. The process for collating the reportable complaints and reporting them to UUK is established and effective.

It is recommended that student accommodation not registered with the UUK Code is considered as part of the audit to ensure that the relevant statutory requirements have been considered by the University.

### **Assistance Required**

Auditors will require assistance from the institutions residential management team to ensure that the timetable for the audits is met. In particular it is envisaged that auditors will require:

- Prompt agreement of the terms of reference and scope of the audit
- Those managers that are required for interview to ensure their reasonable availability within the timescales agreed
- Timely completion of self-assessments where required
- Access to the relevant records of the institution examples of which are given below:-

### **Examples of information Auditors will need to have available as part of the assessment process.**

- ❖ Institutions risk register/sub-register covering housing related risks (fire, disease, major breakdowns etc), together with any procedures developed to manage the identified risks.
- ❖ Examples of the information provided to prospective residents of institutions' accommodation.
- ❖ Welcome packs or other induction material issued to students in relation to housing, including any instructions on the use of gas and electrically operated equipment.
- ❖ Example tenancy/licensing agreements.
- ❖ Copy of the student handbook.
- ❖ Copies of institutions' plans/policies in respect of the following (where available):
  - management of student accommodation
  - relationship between managers, as landlords, and students, as tenants or licensees
  - code of student behaviour

- student discipline
- ❖ Service level statements or equivalent regarding the operation of the institutions' accommodation (e.g. condition at start of occupancy, frequency of cleaning, maintenance response times, snow and ice clearance times etc).
- ❖ Details of any institutions' accommodation not managed and controlled by the institution (i.e. residences whose management has been contracted out to a third party).
- ❖ Records of fire alarm testing and inspection.
- ❖ Records of testing of other safety equipment (such as fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, emergency secondary power supplies, fire door integrity including door closures, automatic door release mechanisms and emergency escape ironmongery such as push bars).
- ❖ Fire evacuation procedures for each building.
- ❖ Records of fire evacuation practices for each establishment.
- ❖ Records or other evidence of gas and electrical safety checks undertaken at institution -owned accommodation.
- ❖ Copies of institutions' plans/policies in respect of the following (where available):
  - portable appliance testing
  - security
  - energy management
  - refuse management
  - environmental management
- ❖ Procedures for the induction of students on arrival at institutions' accommodation
- ❖ Copies of institutions' plans/policies in respect of student behaviour and discipline.

## **Outputs**

Institutions are required to present the findings of this work to UUK/Guild HE. The report findings will be submitted to the institutions quality management monitoring framework which is normally via Audit Committee or similar.

The institutional contact will submit to the National Administrator, the relevant section of the auditors' reports, the local managements' responses and the timescale for addressing auditors' recommendations. In addition Auditors are encouraged to highlight areas of notable practices in the institutions approach which may also be submitted to the National Administrator.

Audit reports must be submitted by the end of April of the year of audit as a minimum standard. Failure to submit a report may lead to the establishment being withdrawn from the CoP.