

## **Consumer Protection and Published Information Policy (Higher Education)**

### **1. Introduction**

The Consumer Rights Act (2015) provides expectations of providers on the information prospective Higher Education students receive. This is to enable students to make informed choices when making decisions about their study.

When a student 'buys' the service of a Higher Education course, they do so in a personal capacity. Therefore, they become a consumer of the service.

As a result, students are consumers for the purpose of student protection law and this provides them with consumer rights, and providers must comply with legal requirements surrounding purchasing. This includes and is not limited to; clear, accessible (format and location), comprehensive, unambiguous, timely and accurate information.

These requirements are inclusive to all stages of the student's journey.

### **2. Definition and Links**

Published information within the context of this policy includes:

- 2.1. Marketing materials
- 2.2. Programme delivery materials
- 2.3. College Complaints policy
- 2.4. Student Terms and Conditions

### **3. Policy Statement**

3.1. The College has two key areas of focus in relation to published information:

- Accurate information is provided to prospective students to inform accurate decision making.
- Accurate information is provided to current and prospective students, issued to them at the time of programme offer.

3.2. Programme changes are communicated to students in a timely and appropriate manner.

### **4. Aims**

- 4.1. Staff are supported to understand the implications of legal expectations of working with legislative frameworks and student protection legislation.
- 4.2. Students are aware of the College's responsibilities to adhere to student protection legislation.

- 4.3. The College must have in place quality assurance systems to safeguard the quality and accuracy of the published materials; and report incidences where breaches have occurred or complaints are made.

## **5. Objectives**

- 5.1. The objectives of the policy are to:
- Ensure that all published information is accurate and accessible.
  - Ensure current and prospective students are informed of college course relevant information; and where changes occur are notified in a timely manner.
  - Provide relevant staff with appropriate training on an annual basis.
  - Ensure monitoring of published information is effective and formally reported through internal committee processes.

## **6. Criteria for Use**

- 6.1. Terms and Conditions must be published and be fair.
- 6.2. A clear complaints process must be accessible in location and layout.
- 6.3. The provider enters a legally binding contact with students when giving information about their educational services. This requires accuracy to information as set out in the prospectus, website and any other course documentation.
- 6.4. The College must provide students with sufficient information, before they enter a contract, and when they have made a choice. Student Protection law applies at both stages.
- 6.5. Students are protected by Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 at the research and application stage of the student's lifecycle.
- 6.6. Students are protected by Student Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 at offer stage.
- 6.7. The contract between students and the college is concluded when the programme offer is accepted. At this point a durable medium must be provided to the student.

## **7. Implementation**

- 7.1. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the procedures and guidelines contained within the College's associated student protection and Published Information (Higher Education) operating procedure and complaints procedure.
- 7.2. The Assistant Principal Higher Education will lead on the implementation of the identified policy and associated procedure.
- 7.3. Curriculum Management Team will monitor complaints surrounding published information and report to the Curriculum and Quality Enhancement Committee.

## **8. Method of Monitoring**

- 8.1. Monitoring will be through the College Management Team and reported to Curriculum and Quality Enhancement Committee.
- 8.2. **Authorship:** Assistant Principal Higher Education
- 8.3. **Date:** December 2024
- 8.4. **Next Review Date:** December 2026
- 8.5. **Reviewing Officers:** Higher Education Compliance Officer.

*This document is available in a variety of formats. Student Services or main reception will supply guidance on the range*