

## INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL			
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<b>Date created/updated:</b>	19 Jan 2017	<b>Review Date:</b>	1 Sept 2017
<b>Approval Need by SLT:</b>	Yes	<b>Date Approved:</b>	Approved by SLT email 27/01/17
<b>Approval Need by Governors:</b>	No	<b>Date Approved:</b>	
<b>Approval Need by Unions:</b>	No	<b>Date Approved:</b>	
<b>Impact Assessment Date*:</b>	07/02/17	<b>Job Title of Assessor:</b>	SLT
<b>Audience:</b>	<b>Staff: Yes</b>	<b>Students: Yes</b>	<b>Public: Yes</b>
<i>If approval is not required by SLT/Governors/Unions please give reason, i.e. name changes only.</i>			
<i>* If the contents of this policy have been copied from an existing policy with <b>no changes</b> please insert the date of the original Impact Assessment and Assessor in the table above.</i>			

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## INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

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### 1. AIM & OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE

#### 1.1 Aim

To offer free and impartial information, advice and guidance on learning and employability to current, past and prospective students of all abilities, as well as the general public.

In cases where staff feel further specialist knowledge is required, clients will be referred to other suitable services or external agencies.

#### 1.2 Objectives

- i. To make people aware of the Information, Advice and Guidance service offered using promotional materials, website, social media, presentations, advice events, enrolment events, induction and the Student Zone on Moodle
- ii. To respond promptly and accurately with impartial and appropriate Information, Advice and Guidance
- iii. To offer an approachable and helpful Information, Advice and Guidance service seeking to be inclusive for all
- iv. To develop effective partnerships with other providers and relevant agencies to enhance the service offered to the clients by referring as appropriate
- v. To ensure all staff regularly update their skills through a variety of training and development opportunities
- vi. To use informal and formal feedback to evaluate, review and improve the service

#### 1.3 Client Outcomes:

Potential and existing students feel supported and are clear about their next steps or have ideas to follow up

(The service is evaluated as part of the annual self-assessment review using various performance measures. Client feedback as well as this evaluation informs the development process of the Service.)

### 2. SERVICES PROVIDED

We can offer help and information on the following issues:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Learning Support</li> <li>• Applications to courses at the College</li> <li>• Careers guidance</li> <li>• Childcare whilst at College</li> <li>• Counselling services</li> <li>• Course Choices and progression opportunities</li> <li>• Employability (Work experience, CV and job search)</li> <li>• Enrichment activities</li> <li>• Financial help (inc. Bursaries and loans)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gap year and voluntary work</li> <li>• Health and Well-being issues</li> <li>• Higher Education (applications and financial help)</li> <li>• International Enquiries and Applications</li> <li>• Job Fairs</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Signposting to external agencies</li> <li>• Student Feedback</li> <li>• Study Support</li> <li>• Transport</li> </ul>
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### 3. INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE INTERVIEWS

- i. Staff provide a range of 'Drop In' and 'Appointment' based interviews.

*Examples include:*

- Drop in visitors to the Course Advice Team, Admissions Team, or Student Support Tutors
- Appointments with Student Services staff / HE & Careers Adviser
- Assist prospective clients, mainly in schools, in completing applications

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- Bespoke presentations
- Community displays and events
- ii. The aim should be for a client to have the opportunity to consider and explore options and receive appropriate support and encouragement
- iii. Confidential rooms will be offered to clients if they request one or it is appropriate. Alternative appropriate rooms will be booked via the College room booking system
- iv. To get the most from our IAG services it is best if clients can be as open and honest as possible in their discussions
- v. Staff will provide impartial IAG at all times and where third party issues are relevant they will make this known

**4. DELAYED/CANCELLED APPOINTMENTS**

In case of illness or unforeseeable circumstances where a member of staff is unavailable to see a client who has an appointment, the following action will be taken:

- i. Another member of staff will cover the appointment if appropriate.
- ii. If not, the client will be contacted via Reception or Student Services Helpdesk at the earliest possible time to apologise and inform them of the cancellation. An alternative appointment should be offered at the earliest convenient opportunity.

**5. COMMUNITY LOCATIONS**

- i. Information, Advice and Guidance Services may be delivered in outreach locations, including when attending events and shows across the county
- ii. Where a service cannot be provided offsite or a client would like a more confidential guidance interview, appointments on site will be offered.

**6. HEALTH & SAFETY**

- i. Staff should ensure that College guidelines are followed (see Health & Safety Policy, Health & Safety Staff guide and Visiting Speakers Policy)
- ii. Students are referred to the Safe Learner's Guide on Moodle and the Student Handbook
- iii. Mobile phones are available to staff when working offsite
- iv. There is a Safeguarding Team for students to contact if they have any concerns about their safety. Posters are displayed throughout the College.

**7. REFERRALS / NETWORKING LINKS**

- i. Shrewsbury Colleges Group works with a variety of organisations to provide educational opportunities, and it is expected that Information, Advice & Guidance Staff will undertake relevant networking with local and national referral points as part of their usual job
- ii. Shrewsbury Colleges Group works on a principle of impartial IAG and within any referral to linked organisations we will endeavour to make clear our links and ensure that clients are provided with a full perspective of the opportunities open to them
- iii. The point at which referral should be undertaken is where a member of staff feels that a client would 'benefit' from the services or assistance of another agency, (or another department within the College). At this stage that member of staff should make this known to the client. This may be verbally, though where deemed necessary may be recorded on the client's ProMonitor record.
- iv. Where there is a referral to a Third Party organisation, the client should be made aware of the links between them and The College. The reason for the referral

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- should be made clear and where possible alternative options should be explained fully
- v. Staff may also act in an advocacy role on a client's behalf where requested or with the express permission of a client
  - vi. Permission must be gained from a client, verbally, before a member of staff contacts any other agencies on their behalf
  - vii. Staff need to consider the client's needs and wishes concerning confidentiality and must also consider national legislation concerning data protection and equality and diversity
  - viii. A client will have the right to request not to be referred if they so desire. Though they may be provided with the relevant information and encouraged to contact other agencies themselves
  - ix. Referral appointment should be made during the client contact where possible and within 5 days if not
  - x. Under "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016" there are additional legislative duties for providers of education and training to improve the well-being of children/young people.
  - xi. Relevant College staff have received training to support this initiative.

**8. PASSING OF INFORMATION TO CLIENTS AND REFERRAL POINTS**

Clients may wish staff to contact other agencies on their behalf and maintain confidentiality. This may be undertaken as appropriate and with both parties agreeing verbally to the action

Where a member of staff has concerns about the objectivity of a referral point, these concerns should be highlighted and explained to the client

**9. RECORDING INFORMATION**

Information will be processed into statistical information which will guide good practice and strategic policy/action. Promonitor is used to record a brief summary of any 1:1 IAG sessions that take place.

**9.1 School Liaison**

School Liaison staff record enquiries received in schools, such as numbers seen and areas of interest. They also assist pupils in completing applications to the College. Copies of paper applications are kept by the Data Team.

**9.2 Welfare/Financial Applications**

- i. Applications for a variety of Welfare and Financial supports are serviced through Student Services, each requiring differing levels of information collection and support from staff. These records contain sensitive information and are kept securely
- ii. Student Services staff provide assistance in completing applications and may act in an advocacy role as well as sitting on appropriate internal resource allocation panels
- iii. Records based on applications may be processed for targeting and statistical purposes.

**9.3 Higher Education and Careers**

- i. A variety of student references and applications for further study are collated and administered. Generally, the HE & Careers Advisor / Student Support Officer deals with outgoing materials and the appropriate storage of related records (paper copy and computer based)

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- ii. UCAS operate an Open Reference policy. However, the HE & Careers Advisor / Student Support Officer would refer the student to their tutor to read references if appropriate.

**9.4 External Community Events**

Records of numbers of visitors seen at external events are kept (e.g. at Community Shows and staff attending school' Careers Conventions). These are used for year on year statistics to confirm interest for courses offered. No confidential or sensitive information is usually involved.

**9.5 Registration details of visitors to Advice Events**

Name, address, postcode, phone number, how they found out about event, and area of interest details are taken at events and held on a database and used to evaluate attendance and subject interest levels. Further information may be sent to relevant visitors as appropriate.

**9.6 Course Advice Team**

- i. Details (Name, address, postcode, phone number and course area) of courses enquiries are logged – except when the information required does not warrant logging e.g. time of course, name of tutor etc.
- ii. Course Advice figures are used for monthly reports to Management to evaluate subject interest and enrolment levels and any courses not currently offered
- iii. Further information may be sent to relevant enquiries as appropriate.

**10. STORAGE OF RECORDS**

- i. Individual members of IAG staff have responsibility for their own records
- ii. Records should be kept under secure (locked cabinets) conditions when not in use and it is recommended that each member of staff holds a secure file for records.
- iii. In the case of outreach work, secure files should be kept with staff at all times and stored securely overnight. Files should not be left overnight in cars.
- iv. Administrative staff collating records should be made aware of their responsibilities concerning confidentiality/security of record when records are in their charge.
- v. Any computer based information is password protected. E.g. Course information and school liaison statistics information is stored electronically and is therefore password protected.
- vi. Records are stored in line with the College's Data Protection policy

**11. FORMATS OF INFORMATION**

- i. Information Advice and Guidance staff hold a range of information providing clients with support on various issues concerning learning and employability.
- ii. ICT based resources such as "Unifrog" are used within the service. These are provided with 1:1 support or signposted to, along with our licence code
- iii. Use is made of web based information (e.g. UCAS). This is accessed by staff and students, with print out information being made available to clients. Clients do not have direct internet access unsupervised.
- iv. Key documents, including Statement of Service and the Information, Advice & Guidance Policy can be supplied by Reception in large print, braille and other languages on request. (Due to the nature of the local ethnic population it is not felt necessary to provide promotional material in a range of languages. However, where the information is requested every effort will be made to satisfy the client and the College will, where possible, aim to provide this information within 3 working days).

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- v. Students are directed to the Student Zone on Moodle at Induction and at Tutorials throughout the year.
- vi. Course factsheets are available either as hard copy or electronically via email or the College websites
- vii. The College websites along with Facebook and Twitter provide information on college services
- viii. The College has contacts with the Sensory Inclusion Service for supplying documents in different formats
- ix. Information Advice and Guidance Staff also work closely with members of the Learning Resource Centre where the main library and careers library are based.

**12. UPDATING INFORMATION**

- i. Information produced internally is dated and updated or replaced annually
- ii. Any external information on display is monitored by appropriate individual staff to ensure it is current.
- iii. Certain documents/publications within the IAG units are produced on an annual basis, such as prospectuses.
- iv. Policies relevant to students are available on Moodle and updated annually
- v. Staff are responsible for updating their own specialist areas of information, reviewing purchases and expiry dates of information. This would take place at one to ones, team meetings or at performance reviews. Staff need to make themselves aware of budget constraints and alternative funding sources from external organisations to help best action this work.
- vi. It is expected that through networking and personal updating staff will review information and resources used within the unit.

**13. STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

- i. Shrewsbury Colleges Group acknowledges that its employees are its most valuable resource, and it is therefore committed to investment in their training and development (T&D). The purpose of this investment is to give all staff the opportunity to develop their skills in order to improve the quality of the performance of the College and to enhance their own careers
- ii. The aims of the College's T&D approaches are to enable staff to:
  - Acquire the knowledge and skills to enable them to perform effectively in their current roles
  - Respond effectively to the demands placed upon them by internal and external change and development
  - Continuously improve the quality of the College Group
- iii. One to One or Team Meetings are held with staff on a termly basis as a minimum
- iv. Performance reviews take place annually.

**14. CLIENT FEEDBACK**

- 14.1 The purpose of the feedback is to provide the service with:

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- Statistical information and personal comments on the experiences of clients and other agencies using the service.
- The information gained is used to enhance best practice and target services to benefit clients most effectively.

**14.2 Methods of gaining feedback:**

We invite and encourage feedback from all clients, either verbally or via completion of client feedback forms. These can be anonymous.

- Feedback forms – given out to clients directly and at various internal events throughout the year or sent via email or post following an event or other contact
- Verbal feedback from staff, including internal emails and comments
- External Letters and Emails are responded to if necessary and kept on file
- 121 and Team meetings – Feedback is an agenda item
- Surveys to students are completed twice a year (November and May). These include questions on Student Services areas.
- Student focus groups meet throughout the year within curriculum areas
- HE Student consultatives held termly
- Annual Review meetings occur with our 8 partner schools
- Questionnaires are given out (to Shropshire Youth staff and pupils) for feedback on prospectus design and content and the presentations at schools
- A College Update Event held annually provides an opportunity for representatives from The Shropshire Youth Service and local schools to give feedback to Student Services staff as well as curriculum staff on the College's services

14.3 Feedback is collated providing annual feedback to continuously review and improve the IAG service within the teams. This is used to inform the Self-Assessment Reviews for each team.

**14.4 Compliments & Complaints Procedure**

- The College has a standard form for any student who has a complaint or grievance
- Any positive comments, made either verbally or via surveys/response forms, are fed back to the relevant member of staff
- Group Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality records and coordinates any complaints and compliments and the Quality committee oversees the annual report for complaints and compliments

**15. RESOURCING**

Purchases are made out of the relevant unit budgets and resource requirements are reviewed at annual budget forecast meetings and reviewed throughout the year. Free literature is accessed where possible, e.g. Government information and University leaflets.

**16. REVIEW & EVALUATION**

There is an annual review of Information, Advice & Guidance policies and procedures. The next review date will be August 2017.