SWC

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Accuracy & Completeness of Published Information Policy

Policy Owner:	Head of Higher Education
Date Approved:	11 April 2024
Version:	V3.0
Equality Screening Date:	23 February 2024
Date of First Issue:	August 2019
Date of Next Review:	March 2027
Location:	Gateway

CONTENTS

1. Purpose

1.1. The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to staff in respect of the information the College is responsible for publishing, and who is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of published information for Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) full time and part time programmes.

1.2. Within Higher Education, the College's Accuracy and Completeness of Public Information Policy has been aligned to and meets the requirements of the UK Quality Code under Expectations for Standards and Expectations for Quality. For further information visit https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code, which highlights the expectation that higher education providers make available valid, reliable, useful and accessible information about their provision.

1.3. South West College is committed to ensuring care in the writing, proofing and publication of all digital and paper-based material. By devising an 'Accuracy and Completeness of Public Information Policy' the College can confidently assure itself where reasonably possible, about the reliability, accuracy, and completeness of its published information in relation to both FE and HE programmes.

1.4. In particular, the College will endeavour to publish full, accurate and verifiable information about its Further and Higher Education quality and standards documentation which promotes transparency and clarity of information relating to Further & Higher Education and that it is not intentionally acting in a misleading manner in relation to published information made available to external and internal stakeholders.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy and procedure will apply to all Further & Higher Education programmes across South West College. Published information within the context of this policy refers to:

- College quality and standards materials including codes of practice, regulations, policies, and guidelines relating to higher education.
- Marketing and publicity materials.
- The College will work within the regulations and codes of practice of its University and Awarding Body partners, and where appropriate, seek the formal approval of quality and standards and marketing materials prior to publishing.

3. **Legislation**

3.1. The Data Protection Act 2018 applies to the operation of this policy.

3.2. Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) insists that under consumer protection law, South West College must fully meet its obligations to students studying on all Higher Education courses. The College must make every attempt to ensure compliance within the following 3 categories:

- Information provision – the need to provide up front, clear, accurate, comprehensive, unambiguous, and timely information to prospective and current students.
- Terms and Conditions – the need to provide a fair and balanced Terms and Conditions to students. HE providers should not rely on terms that could disadvantage students.
- Complaint handling processes and practices – the need to ensure that complaint handling processes and practices are accessible, clear, and fair to students.

A critical success factor in ensuring that the College and HE course teams meet its CMA obligations to HE students is to ensure all public information protocols within this policy are followed and that timelines are adhered to.

4. <u>Responsibilities</u>

4.1. The Principal and Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of all College Policies and Procedures.

4.2. Each academic area will review its published information within the prospectus, programme leaflets, digital platforms, and other relevant marketing material on an annual basis and in conjunction with the College's Marketing Department.

4.3. The Heads of Department, Head of Higher Education and the Director of Curriculum will act as the final auditors of the prospectus taking into account the appropriateness, accuracy and fairness of information to be published. This process must culminate in the development of a final report in which managers will approve, subject to changes, or not approve the appropriateness and accuracy of information proposed. All staff have a responsibility to give full and active support for the policy by ensuring that they understand its content and procedures and that it is implemented appropriately.

5. <u>Marketing and Publicity Materials</u>

5.1. The College recognises in all instances that its partner Further & Higher Education Institutions are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of all publicity and marketing information relating to their awards delivered by South West College. However above and beyond the governance of partner regulations, the College is committed to ensuring that its own internal systems for approving, reviewing, and developing marketing and publicity materials are rigorous, systematic, and intended to minimise risk of error or potential misrepresentation.

5.2. The College will work to ensure that where reasonably possible, all marketing and publicity material considers principles of accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness in relation to such matters as:
- Images used.
- Use of partner HEI logos.
- Entry criteria.

- The award title.

- Module/unit titles

- Modes of delivery.

- Methods of assessment.

- Fees and additional costs incurred.

- Public, statutory, and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements.

6. Actions to Implement and Develop Policy

6.1. The College reserves the right to make changes to, or remove items with regard to its digital platforms, courses, marketing materials, regulations, codes of practice, policies or guidelines, or remove or alter any content at any time without notice.

6.2. The college publishes its information as accurately as is possible. In some exceptional cases the College may be required to amend certain information but will do so in consultation with students and other stakeholders to avoid any detriment.

6.3. College Heads of Department / Course Co-ordinators or nominated person(s) must endeavour to ensure the accuracy, completeness and reliability of information produced by faculties and schools, prior to and following publishing of material for external or internal purposes.

7. Quality and Standards of Materials

7.1 With regard to Higher Education, all regulations, codes of practice, policies or guidelines will be identifiable through a distinct code allocated and visible on the cover page of the document. Each document on its front page will include the:

- Version number.

- Date approved.

- Date for review.

- Committee through which the document originates.

- Board through which approval is obtained.

7.2 All regulations, codes of practice, policies or guidelines relating to Higher Education must originate from the Quality Assurance Manager/ Head of Higher Education and be approved at the College's Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB) and Educational Committee of the governing body.

7.3 Regulations, codes of practice, policies or guidelines must be subject to periodic review. The approval and implementation of revisions is the responsibility of the HEAB and committees to which it delegates responsibility.

7.4 Following approval of new or revised regulations, codes of practice, policies or guidelines, the Quality Assurance Manager/ Head of Higher Education must ensure that Departments are appropriately informed of all changes.

7.5 All regulations, codes of practice, policies or guidelines once approved must be accessible to staff, students, prospective students and other stakeholders via the College website and virtual learning environment (VLE).

7.6 The language the College uses in respect of its quality and standards regulations, codes of practice, policies or guidelines must be reviewed to ensure transparency and to ensure clarity is not compromised.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 Each academic area will review its published information within the prospectus, programme leaflets, web site and other relevant marketing material on an annual basis and in conjunction with the College's Marketing Department.

8.2 The Heads of Department, Head of Higher Education and Director of Curriculum will act as the final auditors of the prospectus taking into account the appropriateness, accuracy and fairness of information to be published.

8.3 The College's Marketing/Communications Department has two processes in place to ensure the accuracy of information for all Higher Education course information (see

Appendix 1: Marketing Department processes to ensure the accuracy of information for Higher Education course information). The key people involved in this process, along with the key principles to support the processes, the hierarchical authorisation structure and the schedule for authorisation are clearly outlined within each process.

8.4   The College under the Collaborative and validated arrangements with the Open University, Ulster University, Queens University Belfast must have all course marketing information approved by the relevant link specialist or Faculty Subject Partnership Manager. It is the responsibility of all College HE Course Directors to update their course information annually and forward to the Head of Higher Education who will subsequently send to the University representative accompanied by the relevant documentation for approval. Only when this approval is gained can the College publish course information relevant to all HEI Awards.

8.5   The College has secured agreement with Queen's University Belfast that the accuracy of course information will be checked by the University's academic affairs unit.

9.   <u>Monitoring and Review</u>

9.1   The College will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy.

9.2   The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this Policy effectively and is committed to reviewing this Policy every three years, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, statutory organisations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and in line with models of good practice.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive: _____

Date: 15.04.24

Signed Chair of the Governing Body: _____

Date: 11/04/2024

Appendix 1: Marketing Department Process to Ensure Accuracy of Information for Higher Education Course Information

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCESS

The Marketing Department has developed and implemented the following processes to ensure the accurate collation and distribution of Higher Education information for use in all College publications, the College website, and all social networking communications.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR ENSURING ACCURACY WITHIN EACH PROCESS:

- The processes put in place are appropriate to the level of information required for Higher Education lecturers, students, potential students, and all awarding bodies.

- All relevant academic staff and management have an adequate timeframe to submit, check and verify all information throughout the process.

- The processes act as controlling mechanisms for the supply and verification of required course information across all Campuses in the South West College.

- The Curriculum Managers are accountable for the information submitted, verified, and approved by them.

- Information supplied must comply with the standards of the awarding body.

- Any staff member who becomes aware of an incident of mistaken or misleading information has a duty to inform their immediate line manager or a member of the appropriate team to rectify this with immediate effect.

- The processes will be reviewed in Semester 1.

SWC

PROCESS

Marketing Course/EBS Session Information
Full & Part-Time Higher Education

> **Session Information**
>
> Previous year's session information extracted from EBS and reviewed by Curriculum Managers **1st week in November.**
>
> **Marketing Information**
>
> HE Course Proforma templates distributed by Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) via email to all Curriculum Managers (CMs) for dissemination to all Higher Education Coordinators **1st week in November.**

> **Last week in November** – Deadline for completed proformas and approved session extract returned to CSOs. Approved information (needed for approval for publication only) passed to the accrediting bodies for approval.

> **1st week in December** – Approved information updated on website by CSOs. Approved information on website available for viewing by prospective students. Information also used for offline recruitment activities (brochures, flyers etc.).

> **2nd week in December** – Information readily available for higher education recruitment campaigns.

Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
Equal Opportunities, Good Relations & Cultural Diversity Policy	Gateway	Head of Higher Education
Higher Education Admissions, Admissions Appeals & RPL Policy	Gateway	Head of Higher Education
Fees and Charges Policy	Gateway	Head of Finance

Change Log

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
Section 1.1	The word 'web' has been replaced with 'digital'. South West College is committed to ensuring care in the writing, proofing and publication of all web and paper based material.	South West College is committed to ensuring care in the writing, proofing and publication of all digital and paper-based material.
Section 4.2, 6.1, 6.3, 6.5	Replace reference to 'web site'	Replace with 'digital platforms'
Section 3	Section 3.2. has been added to include responsibilities in accordance with CMA	A new section has been added entitled: 3.2 Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
4.3, 6.6, 7.4, 8	Reference to SWC Faculty / Faculties	Replaced with Department / Departments
4.3, 7.2, 7.4, 8	Centre for Excellence Manager for Higher Education	Replaced with Head of Higher Education
4.3, 8	References to Centre for Excellence have been removed	
4.3	Reference to Assistant Chief Executive Industry Partnerships	Replaced with Director of Curriculum
6.2	Changing circumstances may cause the College to have to adjust its provisions at any time and in some instances, despite its best efforts, the College's published information relating to higher education may sometimes fall short of what is needed.	Replaced with: The college publishes its information as accurately as is possible. In some exceptional cases the college may be required to amend certain information but will do so in consultation with students and other stakeholders to avoid any detriment
6.3	Removed: The College excludes any warranty, express or implied, as to the accuracy, currency, completeness, or fitness for any particular purpose of its digital platforms or any of its contents.	

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
6.4	Removed: The College makes no representations that information is accurate and up to date or complete and accepts no liability for any loss or damage caused by inaccurate information.	
6.5	Removed: The College will not be responsible for any claims for damages arising from the use or non-use of its digital platforms or any of its contents.	
Appendix	Updated process document: Marketing Department Process to Ensure Accuracy of Information for Higher Education Course Information	

Communication

Communication requirements	
Who needs to know (for action)	Senior Management Team Heads and Deputy Heads of Department Course Directors Marketing team
Who needs to be aware	All staff

Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload to Gateway	J Lucas	On approval
Circulation to all staff	L Curran / J Kelly	On approval

Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Role
L Curran	Head of Higher Education
J Kelly	Higher Education Development Coordinator

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date
N/A		

Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	10 April 2024

Document History

Issue no. under review	Date of review:	Persons involved in review	Changes made after review? Yes/No If Yes refer to change log	New Issue No.	If changes made was consultation required?	If changes made was Equality Screening required?
V1.0	September 2021	Liam Curran	Yes	V2.0	Yes – Marketing Dept.	Yes
V2.0	February 2024	Liam Curran / Julie Kelly	Yes	V3.0	No	Yes