

**SANDWELL
COLLEGE**

A CAREERS COLLEGE

sandwell.ac.uk

Higher Education Public Information Policy and Procedures



1. Policy

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity over specific measures taken by Sandwell College in satisfying itself that control measures are in place for the information that is published in relation to its higher education (HE) provision and associated services.

The policy covers information published in electronic or printed format, which refers to HE academic programmes, services, corporate strategy and policies.

This policy does not cover letters, verbal communication, teaching and learning materials, presentations, scholarly activity, creative work or staff recruitment advertisements.

Sandwell College is committed to publishing information that is accurate and fair and we aim to enable both internal and external audiences to gain an accurate impression of the organisation in order to make informed decisions and embrace the equality of opportunity for all.

1.2 Aims

To ensure that published information enables students and external stakeholders to make informed judgements and that the information gives an accurate impression of Sandwell College and is:

- Accurate
- Fit for purpose
- Trustworthy
- Transparent and open
- Timely and up to date
- Accessible.

To ensure that the published information enables the public to make informed judgements and the information gives an accurate impression of Sandwell College.

To ensure clear and effective communication about Sandwell College and its HE provision, which meets regulatory requirements as set out by the Office for Students (OfS) and which meets the legal requirements for Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and subsequent amendments as well as the requirements for the Data Protection Act 1998 and quality standards set out by the UK Quality Code and MATRIX.

2. Accessibility and Equality

All information will be provided in accessible formats on request in order to meet the needs of individuals.

Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Director of Marketing and Engagement, who will endeavour to ensure requests are met, provided these are reasonable and economically possible.

3. Policies, Procedures and Strategies

Sandwell College HE policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and approved by the College's Higher Education Quality Group.

Lead responsibility for college-wide policies and procedures are allocated to members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Vice Principal will be responsible for final approvals.

Staff development is conducted annually and follows any significant changes to a policy or strategy.

Policies and procedures which directly affect students and relate to recruitment, admissions, complaints and academic appeals will be available on Sandwell College website and student VLE.

4. Communicating Information

Sandwell College Information takes the form of the following:

Marketing

- Sandwell College website
- HE Prospectus
- UCAS website
- Internal and external advertising i.e. posters, flyers, banners, newspaper adverts, press releases, postcards, leaflets
- Social Media

Student Communication

- Letters
- Sandwell College Student VLE - Moodle
- Student Course Handbooks

Staff Communication

- Sandwell College Staff VLE
- Staff Handbook

Information is only authorised by nominated managers within Sandwell College to ensure that it is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy and complies with the UK Quality Code.

Sandwell College follows, where available, the marketing procedures of the partner Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to maintain compliance with agreed contracts.

In practice, staff have authority to communicate autonomously in a range of media, however if information displays the HEI branded logo and course titles then procedures are adhered to as stated above.

The Sandwell College logo can only be used with adherence to the College standards and brand guidelines.

All student course handbooks are updated annually by course leaders in line with relevant College, awarding body, curriculum or other changes.

All student course handbooks are audited annually by the Head of HE in order to maintain quality standards and adherence to the HEI partnership quality assurance guidelines, where relevant.

All course leaders are responsible for the monitoring of their course area VLE content to ensure accuracy and completeness of information.

5. Marketing Communication

This includes both printed and electronic publications and advertisements that are designed to promote courses and events to potential students.

Definition of terms

'Prospectus' – a printed and electronic document that illustrates the HE provision both full and part time, undergraduate and postgraduate in the form of Teacher Training etc. Further information is also made available in the form of support and procedures for applying to courses.

'Publications' – documents and other items published by Sandwell College including leaflets, display stands, webpages, advertising, text/images that appear as internal or external publications.

Sandwell College seeks to make all reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy of all information that is provided by defined individuals within Sandwell College. The College is committed to abiding by the marketing procedures of both Sandwell College and partner HEIs, where available.

6. Sandwell College HE Prospectus

Procedures are in place for the checking and accuracy of the information published within the HE prospectus at both Sandwell College and the partner HEIs. A series of checks are undertaken to ensure accuracy at the time of going to print.

The HE prospectus is compiled by the Marketing Team who work in conjunction with the Curriculum Leaders. In turn other lead personnel are involved in verifying the accuracy of items such as student support and student finance. Validated course information is approved by the partner HEI at the time of course approval or periodic course review/re-validation. All approvers are accepting responsibility for the statements that are used as being factually accurate and compliant with legislation at the time of going to print.

The HE prospectus is sent to partner HEIs in order to ensure accuracy of information prior to being signed off by the Director of Marketing & External Engagement for print and electronic distribution.

Information within the new prospectus is consistent with that on Sandwell College website and other internal and external literature.

Information provided to external organisations is signed off by the Director of Marketing & External Engagement; however the College does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information reproduced by other agencies once it has left the College.

7. Communication with the press/media

No individual member of staff has the authority to speak to or contact the media or respond to requests. All requests are to go through the Director of Marketing & External Engagement.

Press releases can only be issued by the Marketing Team and authorised by a member of the College's Executive Team.

8. Sandwell College HE information

At Sandwell College we are committed to making it easy for prospective and current students and the wider general public to access information that we publish about ourselves, as well as the courses and services we offer.

There is a set of key information that all higher education providers are expected to make available online or by request.

The following information is set out on Sandwell College website and available in other forms upon request:

Information about us as an Institution

- Mission Statement
- Strategic Plan
- Governors and Corporation meetings
- Access & Participation Statement
- Information for Students and Parents

Information about our HE courses

- HE prospectus
- HE Admissions Policy
- How to apply

- The benefits of studying at Sandwell College
- Fees and financial support
- Study support

Complaints and Academic Appeals

- Complaints policy and procedures
- Academic assessment appeals policy

Information on Partnerships with Awarding Bodies

Information on the Quality and Standards of our Programmes

- Outcomes of QAA reviews
- Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures
- Transparency information (as provided by the OfS)
- Student Protection Plan

HE Course Information

- Qualification title
- Awarding body
- Level of award
- Entry requirements

Imagery

Any images, video or music is copyright of Sandwell College, or if this is not the case, is used with permission and acknowledged. Images of students are compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998. The social networking sites are badged as belonging to Sandwell College and are managed appropriately.

Programme Specifications

All HE courses have approved programme specifications which are held centrally and are available on request.

Partner Universities

Partner universities can complete an annual check of all public information that has been produced throughout the academic year, as well as during any periodic course reviews/re-validations. This includes both digital copies and Sandwell College website. As and when publicity materials are created, Marketing will forward these to partners to confirm accuracy and ensure compliance with institutional guidelines.

9. Responsibility

The following staff have a collective responsibility for the accuracy of information:

Vice Principal

- Overview of all HE Information
- Overall responsibility for compliance with regulatory requirements, such as set out by the OfS
- Audit of website in conjunction with marketing
- Liaison with the marketing team on marketing campaigns, events and promotions of the HE offer compliance with Sandwell College public information policy and procedures

Director of Marketing and External Engagement

Responsible for the accuracy of:

- The HE prospectus, internal and external advertising, publicity material
- Communication with HEIs on all public information that displays the brand and advertising of their courses
- Information for College promotional events
- Protection of the Sandwell College brand

- Compliance with the HEIs' brand guidelines and policy on partner institutions' marketing guidelines policy and procedures
- Compliance with the regulatory requirements

Marketing Team

Responsible for the management of:

- Website
- Social media
- Protection of Sandwell College brand
- Compliance with the HEIs' guidelines on all published information that advertises the HEI courses
- Promoting of College events
- Liaison with Admissions on any changes to Sandwell College website to ensure consistency of UCAS information
- Compliance with Sandwell College public information policy and procedures
- Compliance with regulatory requirements
- HE news

Head of HE

Centralised control over:

- The accuracy and reliability of generic HE information
- The accuracy and reliability of course information
- Communication with HEIs on all public information of validated courses
- Compliance with regulatory requirements

Course Leaders

Responsible for:

- HE Course Staff
- Accuracy and annual up-date of:
 - Course Handbooks
 - Course materials, including assessment

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