Principles for the Management of Published Information for Existing and Prospective Students

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Overview

1. The University places student success at the heart of our mission. We are committed to providing accurate, timely, fair and transparent published information to support our students' success and to maximise a positive experience for them throughout their time with us. Alongside our commitments, the provisions set out in the Consumer Rights Act 2015 enshrine in law a student's status as a consumer and prompted legal advice by the Competition & Markets Authority in relation to the management of published information, which made clear the requirement for all published information available both to applicants applying to study with us and registered students to be transparent, accurate, fair and reasonable.

2. This guidance is not designed to be prescriptive in relation to the content of published information but instead sets out (i) the principles that should underpin the management and preparation of student-related published information across the University; and (ii) the criteria for the regular review of published information. Please note that the guidance covers student-related information only and is not relevant for other groups, such as staff.

Definition of Published Information

3. Published Information in this context is any information available to applicants and students during the application process and their period of study that may affect them during the period of study, including but not exclusively information about the course, including any course changes, as well as policies, procedures and processes that may affect them. It covers both printed and online content. Information presented to prospective students may be considered material affecting the contract that is agreed with students at the offer stage. For the purposes of this guidance, the term student covers applicants, applicants with an offer and registered students.

Principles underlining the management of student-related published information

4. All information affecting students and provided to students should be transparent, accessible and usually published through the University website. Students should be proactively informed of any changes and, depending on the content, provided with an opportunity to comment, particularly about any changes to their course.

5. All published information should:

   - Be clear, transparent and accurate

   - Not be open to interpretation and/or misleading to such an extent that

   - Provide students with sufficient information to make an informed choice

   - Clearly explain the circumstances where changes might be made, and a consistent notice period provided to inform students of any changes

   - Be published in a location where students are most likely to find, look or access it

   - Be linked to other relevant items of information, with clear and appropriate links and cross-referencing in order to enable easy navigation, taking into consideration the student perspective.

   - Be available in different, accessible formats appropriate to the range of students who may wish to use them, with the method of requesting these clearly stated.

   - Be written in clear, plain and intelligible language. The use of jargon, unfamiliar language or abbreviations should be minimised. Where any unfamiliar or HE sector-specific language is used, a full explanation should be provided.

Criteria for the regular review of published information

6. An appropriate method or process and a schedule should be established and embedded to ensure that published information is captured, reviewed and updated regularly, according to the contents and requirements of the information. The process should include Committee approval where appropriate and always in relation to University policy. Any new student-related information that is prepared should be added to the relevant review schedule to ensure it is reviewed and updated regularly. Information should be reviewed at least every three years, maybe sooner depending on its purposes. A clear review process should be established (if not already in place), particularly in relation to policies, which should also

include a document overview table with key information provided about ownership, review and approval for changes.

7. Any review of published information should ensure that documents:

- Reference a named owner; this should be a role or team.

- Reference a previous review date or include details of review frequency within the document.

- Are accessible to students (as described above) and include the following statement: *If you require this document in an alternative format, such as braille, please contact [insert name and contact details].* The person responsible for the policy or document should implement appropriate arrangements to enable the production of alternative formats in response to requests.

- Are reasonable and take account of the terms and conditions that any student agreed to through the application and registration processes.

- Are not written in loose terms that would enable drastic changes that might affect a student to be made without their knowledge or consultation.

- Are included in the review schedule for future review/updates.

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