



Ruskin College Oxford

PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Created: July 2016

Approved: AQSC – Governing Executive

Last Reviewed: -

Responsibility for Review: AQSC – Governing Executive

Date of Next Review: May 2019

Public Information Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

The policy supports Ruskin College's procedure for oversight, control, quality and review over public domain information about the College, which is produced and distributed by the College.

2. AIM

To ensure Ruskin College publishes information which is:

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

To ensure published information enables audiences to form an accurate impression of Ruskin College, make informed decisions, allows for a clear and effective communication about and within the college and meet any applicable legal obligations e.g. in relation to the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988, the Consumer Rights Act 2015, and the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all public information in printed, electronic or broadcast form which is intended to be made public which refers to all Ruskin College's courses and activities.

4. Policy

- 4.1 The College has adopted the guidance provided by the Information Commissioner in order to comply with Freedom of Information.
- 4.2 Information must be published in a manner that adequately meets the standards required by legislation, awarding bodies, regulatory bodies and stakeholder requirements.
- 4.3 All documents will be checked for grammar, punctuation, spelling and format prior to publication.
- 4.4 Public information provided will be in accordance with the college values, i.e. be transparent and processed in an open and honest manner.
- 4.5 All staff should ensure that information provided, including that on the website, intranet and through social media channels complies with college policies meets the college's standards of quality, is accurate, timely, up to date, reliable and fit for purpose.
- 4.6 Information will be provided in accessible formats. The College will endeavour to meet the requests of individuals where this is deemed reasonable.
- 4.7 Information will meet any applicable legal obligations e.g. in relation to copyright and the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 4.8 All communications with the press and media will be through the College Communications Officer.
- 4.9 The procedure for the checking of student information in accordance with the requirements of the College's validating bodies is outlined in section 6. All student-facing documentation for validating bodies will confirm with 5.1 below.

5. Procedure

5.1 College Standards

- 5.1.1 The author of any document to be published either internally or externally should submit a Marketing Request Form to the College Communications Officer using the College template (Appendix 1).
- 5.1.2 Authors of Policies and Procedures particularly, but also other information sources should ensure that they are referenced to the requirements of legislation and regulatory bodies where appropriate.
- 5.1.3 Authors are responsible for ensuring that information is published according to the College standards.
- 5.1.4 The College Communications Officer will be responsible for ensuring that standards are in place and available to staff.
- 5.1.5 All information published externally must be signed off by the College Communication Officer and then submitted by them for final approval by the College Principal or Vice- Principal
- 5.1.6 The College logo can only be used with adherence to the College standards.

5.2 Freedom of Information

- 5.2.1 The College's Communications Officer will be responsible for ensuring that information published by the College is mapped under Freedom of Information legislation.
- 5.2.2 All formal requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act must be passed to the College Communications Officer immediately upon receipt.
- 5.2.3 The College Communications Officer will maintain a log and manage the request to completion within 20 days.
- 5.2.4 Requests by the College Communications Officer to provide records relating to a FOI request must receive urgent and immediate action.

5.3 Policies, Procedures and Strategies

- 5.3.1 Responsibility for authoring and review of college policies and strategies will be allocated to appropriate managers. The College Communications Officer will, in conjunction with the College Principal/Vice-Principal, be responsible for the evaluation of each policy/procedure and strategy.
- 5.3.2 Policies which directly affect students and relate to recruitment, admissions, complaints and appeals, examinations and student discipline will be available in a timely fashion through the College web site and student intranet.
- 5.3.3 Equality Impact Assessment – those with responsibility for policies should engage with the Equality Impact Assessment framework to effectively assess new and amended policies for any discriminating elements. A screening checklist must be completed by the author for each policy developed or reviewed.
- 5.3.4 The Governing Executive is responsible for approving any changes in policy and the College Principal is responsible for approving changes in procedure.
- 5.3.5 Communication via social media sites and tools must protect the College's institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. College staff who use personal social media accounts must not give the impression that their social media site represents the explicit positioning of Ruskin College. Social media are powerful communication tools but they carry significant risks to the reputation of the College and its members. A prominent risk arises from the blurring of the lines between personal voice and institutional voice (see Social Media Policy).
- 5.3.6 Any social media announcements issued, or approved by, the Social Media Officer, which may include (but are not limited to) content, comments and opinions must not give the impression they are in anyway the explicit positioning of Ruskin College. Any official College position and comment must be approved by the Principal, or his or her representative, or the Social Media Officer.

5.4 Course Related Information

- 5.4.1 All advertised courses must have an accurate fact sheet, which must be published on the website.
- 5.4.2 Fact sheets for new courses should be prepared and included in the course approval process.
- 5.4.3 Fact Sheets must be updated as required to accurately reflect current provision.
- 5.4.4 College prospectuses are produced annually in line with applicant need and the timeline of production of course related information.

March Part-time FE and HE prospectus published for courses commencing September following

April – May Collection of FE and HE prospectus information for courses

June Editing and final publication of FE and HE prospectus

- 5.4.5 Out of date course information must be removed from circulation
- 5.4.6 All course and College marketing materials must meet the guidelines of the relevant awarding bodies.

6. Documents Associated with this Policy

Open University Public Information Process for Partner Institutions

Oxford Brookes University Information Process for Partner Institutions

Competition and Markets Authority: UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law.

The College Social Media Policy.