

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICY

1. Objective

To ensure that all public information being published by Grantham College is clear, timely, accurate, appropriate, transparent and supports the aims of the organisation and the needs of the intended audiences.

2. Scope

This guidance covers information published in electronic or printed form which refers to academic programmes, services, corporate information and policies. It does not cover letters (other than those written in a marketing context), verbal communication, teaching and learning materials, staff recruitment advertisements or the output of research and academic activity.

3. Context

Public information is communicated in the context of legislation and best practice guidelines including data protection and freedom of information.

4. Approvals process

Identified stakeholder(s) are responsible for the development of a specific piece of public information. No pieces of information should be published in the public domain without stakeholder or ultimately Senior Leadership Team (SLT) approval. Please see Appendix A for stakeholder information and process, detailing the final stakeholder authorisation.

Consideration should be given to the time being provided for approvals. Stakeholders needing to approve the release of public information should therefore be given as much notice as possible. There will be times, however when that information has a tight deadline and the need to release it is greater than the need to secure sign-off from the appropriate stakeholders. The aim will always be to minimise the number of occasions on which this happens and in such a situation the Chief Executive or nominated member of the SLT will take responsibility.

The nominated stakeholder(s) should be briefed on how the information is being used and the purpose for its publication, so that they can judge if it is appropriate and accurate for the identified audience.

It is the responsibility of the person circulating the copy to ensure that the information being provided for stakeholder sign-off is up to date and accurate. Any figures must have been checked against the original source and approved, where possible.

4.1 Responsibility of the stakeholder providing the sign off

If a stakeholder is unsure about any of the information they are being asked to approve, they should not provide sign off until they have received the assurances/information required. The stakeholder is within their rights to query any information they are unsure about, with the sender and/or refer it back to someone with the technical knowledge to judge if it is correct.

Sign offs should be provided either on email, or by signing a piece of artwork or copy and dating it. A copy will be held by the marketing team for future auditing, if necessary. If a stakeholder has approved the information for release and it later turns out to be inaccurate or inappropriate for the intended audience, then the stakeholder will be contacted for clarification.

4.2 Technical information usage

Any technical information to be used for marketing purposes and to appear on the website should be provided by the relevant stakeholders (e.g. Curriculum Manager or member of the College Leadership Team (CLT)) and approved by the relevant member of SLT. If appropriate, marketing will help craft this information into the correct format and style for the target audience, which would then be passed back to the relevant stakeholders for approval prior to being made public. Students should also be consulted about the design and development of information and messages where required. Stakeholders or nominated staff should check the relevant pages on the website when information has been published and raise any issues as soon as possible.

4.3 The release of any information to the media

All prospective press releases, advertisement copy and proactive or reactive media statements must be provided to the Marketing Manager for consideration and approval prior to being issued to any member of the media or external publication. These could include but are not limited to print and broadcast media, websites, blogs, newsletters and social media.

The marketing department will ensure that any information to be released to the media adheres to the college's style guide and standards. The marketing team will also co-ordinate sending this information out to the most appropriate publications to maximise impact, and stakeholders will recommend suitable specialist publications to disseminate to.

Prior to the release of any information to the media, it will be passed back to the stakeholder for sign-off. If a staff member or student is being quoted in any respect, they must give consent before the quote can be used. It is that staff member or student's responsibility to ensure that the information being quoted is accurate and appropriate to the audience before they supply or approve it.

If a member of staff is contacted by any member of the media requesting an interview or to be filmed, this request must be passed to a member of SLT for approval. The same is true of filming or broadcast requests on college property, i.e. a request to interview a student on campus prior to deciding whether the interview is in the best interests of the college and can go ahead. The only exception to this rule is when staff are attending an event or sporting fixture and a member of the media requests an interview at that time, i.e. immediately after a fixture. It is then the responsibility of that staff member to ensure that the information they provide is accurate, appropriate for the audience and enhances and/or protects the reputation of the college.

4.4 Social Media

The Marketing Manager may authorise information being shared on college social media accounts. Any information publicly released on social media must have been

approved similarly to those outlined above, i.e. it will already have been through a sign-off process as a media release, web article or marketing material. Only staff members working within the marketing team may have access to college social media accounts. Any comment on social media made by the college can be quoted by a media agency without our prior knowledge, and should therefore be approved as if it was a quote made directly to the media. However, due to the fast-paced nature of social media and the risk of situations escalating quickly, stakeholders must be aware that the sign off timescales are significantly reduced to ensure the college is able to respond or act to correct inaccurate and/or damaging content on social media. Senior staff sign off must still always be sought, even if out of hours.

In the event of controversial enquiries made on social media, the marketing team must be contacted for advice before any response is provided. The marketing team can then alert the relevant member of SLT who will approve the release of information.

Staff or students should remember that they are acting as ambassadors for the college on social media. They should not use any social media accounts linked to the college to express personal views or to comment on college issues. Staff or students should also not communicate anything on any accounts linked to the college that could be seen as being politically motivated. If in doubt, the marketing team should be contacted for advice.

In certain cases, it may be more appropriate to take a discussion offline (to direct message, email or phone) if it is more appropriate to do so (e.g. for reasons of confidentiality or if more detailed explanation is required). Again, the marketing team must be contacted for advice.

The marketing team must also be contacted if it is felt that any information posted could result in media enquiries.

Appendix A: Stakeholder approval process

All stakeholders are accepting responsibility for statements being factually accurate, reasonable, verifiable, and compliant with relevant legislation. The Grantham College staff members, identified below, therefore have joint and collective responsibility for the final approval.

Stage 1: Content

<p>Descriptions of academic programmes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate description of the programme, modules, facilities, staff expertise • Accurate use of terminology including award titles • Reasonable information about learning and career outcomes that can be supported by evidence • Correct and appropriate use of external endorsements, quality ratings, and information about professional accreditation • Correct contact details 	<p>Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality Curriculum Managers</p>
<p>Accurate descriptions of services, facilities and associated procedures.</p> <p>Information about services provided, pricing, availability of services, administrative procedures.</p>	<p>Assistant Principal, HR & Student Services MIS Manager Student Life Manager Student Experience Manager</p>
<p>References to fees, bursaries, loans, and other financial awards</p>	<p>Assistant Principal, HR & Student Services MIS Manager Curriculum Managers</p>
<p>Confirmation of the approval status of award titles for approved programmes</p>	<p>Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality Curriculum Managers</p>
<p>Entry requirements, application codes and admissions procedures</p>	<p>Student Experience Manager MIS Manager</p>
<p>Departmental information including staff profiles, research, news stories and wider student experience.</p>	<p>College Leadership Team</p>

Stage 2: Quality

The overall quality of public information is the responsibility of the Chief Executive.

Stage 3: Non-media related final approval

Final approval lies with the member of CLT, or in their absence a member of SLT.

Stage 4: Media related final approval

Final approval lies with a member of SLT.

Glossary

Stakeholder

A person with the authority to develop and agree Public Information. While there is no set number of stakeholders for any particular public information document, a member of staff with the appropriate level of responsibility will be assigned to authorise publication. These stakeholders will be established at the outset and will be relevant to the individual piece of activity.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

This refers to a member of the College's executive committee.

- Chief Executive;
- Principal;
- Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality;
- Assistant Principal, HR & Student Services ;
- Director of Business Development;
- Director of Quality

College Leadership Team (CLT)

This refers to the managers of the College, inclusive of the SLT.

- Estates Manager;
- Catering Functions Manager;
- CCSS Manager;
- Finance Manager;
- Curriculum Managers;
- MIS Manager;
- Student Experience Manager;
- Student Life Manager;
- Marketing Manager.

Quality Assurance – version control			
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