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<b>Policy Area</b>	Area 9: Public Information and Communication
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<b>Applies to</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific ( <i>Staff involved in the review and update of public information</i> )
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff only <input type="checkbox"/> Learners only <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and Learners

<b>Document Owner</b>	Director of Quality & Academic Affairs
<b>Approved by</b>	Academic Council

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<b>Related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and local protocols</b>	<p>This policy has been designed with due regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012</li> <li>- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), et. al (2015), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)</li> </ul>
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## 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clearly set out the principles that underpin the effective and transparent communication of public information concerning SQT and the programmes and services it offers. The document sets out the protocols and procedures adapted by SQT in implementing this policy.

## 2 BACKGROUND

This policy has been designed with due regard to the following:

- I. **QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines** – these guidelines specify that providers have policies and procedures in place to ensure information published is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and easily accessible.
- II. **Irish and European Law** – the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (section 67) states that “A provider shall, before commencing a programme of education and training and before accepting any payment from or on behalf of an enrolled learner in respect of the programme, notify the enrolled learner in writing of specific information about the programme”<sup>1</sup>.

## 3 SCOPE/APPLICATION

This policy applies to all staff involved in the promotion of SQT’s programmes and those responsible for reviewing, updating and approving public information. Specifically, it applies to communication with prospective learners, other stakeholders and the general public.

## 4 DEFINITIONS

- **Public Information** refers to information that providers communicate and publish about their activities, including their education and training programmes, research and related services; quality assurance policies and procedures; and evaluation and findings from quality assurance evaluations<sup>2</sup>.
- **Moodle** is the Virtual Learner Environment (VLE) / online portal used by SQT to support the delivery of some of its accredited programmes. It is also utilised as a document repository for activities such as the Lean Six Sigma network and as a portal for Tutors.

## 5 RESPONSIBILITY

The following personnel are involved in the implementation of this policy:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/28/section/67/enacted/en/html#sec67>

<sup>2</sup> QQI Core QA Guidelines (2016), pg. 19

- The Accreditation and Systems Manager is responsible for updating public information concerning QA (such as examination results) and programme information, following approval by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs.
- The Marketing Manager is responsible for marketing the approved programmes using content from the official course brochures on the website. The Marketing Manager also disseminates this information to relevant third-party promoters.

## 6 POLICY STATEMENT

### 6.1 Introduction

SQT acknowledges that public awareness is vital in maintaining public confidence in the organisation and is therefore committed to ensuring that relevant information is transparent, accurate, objective, impartial and easily accessible by all relevant stakeholders. The organisation's website is the primary platform for the provision of public information in addition to email marketing and secondary social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter.

This section specifically relates to the provision of public information specific to the provider such as:

- programmes under offer.
- quality assurance documentation such as policies and procedures.
- QA reports as they become available pursuant to the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 (section 67).

### 6.2 Publication of Provider Information

SQT is committed to ensuring that up to date information about the following aspects of the organisation is available on the organisation's website.

- Contact details
- SQT's profile and philosophy
- SQT's strategy
- Staff and tutor profiles
- Details about types of course delivery (public or in-house)
- Information about public training venues
- Information about awarding bodies

### 6.3 Publication of Programme Specific Information

SQT is committed to providing prospective and current learners with up-to-date and accurate information regarding all of its programmes and activities. Prospective learners, other stakeholders and the general public can obtain information about all programmes via the website and through direct communication with Course Administration Managers and teaching staff, if necessary.

The following information is published for programmes offered by SQT:

**Mandatory information for all programmes:**

- Programme title
- Duration
- Course times for face-to-face delivery
- Programme schedules
- Public programme pricing (if course is offered on a public basis)
- Entry Requirements 'What are the Entry Requirements?'
- Expected learning outcomes 'What's Covered?'
- Profile of applicable learners 'Who Should Attend?'
- Detailed Programme Outline 'What will I Learn?'
- Tutor Details 'Who are the Tutors?'
- Teaching and Learning Mechanisms and Relevant Supports 'How do we Train and Support You?'
- Learner Testimonials
- Refund and cancelled courses policy

The following additional information is included for relevant **accredited programmes** only:

- Award type
- Awarding body
- Information specific to the awarding body
- NFQ Level (if applicable)
- ECTS Credits (if applicable)
- Assessment information 'How will I be Assessed'
- Details of Protection for Learners arrangements (if applicable)
- Details of Transfer and Progression arrangements (if applicable)

## **6.4 Publication of Quality Assurance Documentation**

SQT publishes the following quality assurance documentation:

- All of SQT's QA documentation (policies, procedures, guidelines, work instruction and associated resources) are maintained on the organisations network and relevant documents are linked to its website and Moodle VLE. This ensures that the most up to date documentation is publicly available. QA updates are communicated to relevant personnel via appropriate mechanisms such as email, Moodle and or webinars for Tutors.
- Pass rates and completion rates for each awarding body.
- Self-Assessment Reports, Institutional Reviews and Quality Improvement Plans (QIP), as they become available.

## 7 PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING PUBLIC INFORMATION

This section describes the protocols and procedures that are in place to ensure that public information is clear, up to date, accurate, objective, impartial and readily accessible.

### 7.1 Protocols

The following protocols are observed with respect to the publication and communication of public information:

- A variety of methods (as determined by the marketing department and Managing Director) are employed to promote the organisation and courses on offer.
- Information is published in plain English and is easily accessible.
- Requirements of specific awarding bodies with respect to public information is strictly adhered to.
- Relevant staff respond to all queries regarding any aspect of public information promptly and accurately. If necessary, the Course Administration Manager facilitates direct communication (via telephone call or meetings) between prospective learners or the company Course Organiser and the individual Tutor or Programme Director.
- Any third party may not publish material using the organisations information, without the explicit approval of SQT.
- Photographs or other personal identifiable information such as learner or company testimonials are not used without the explicit consent of the individual or company.

### 7.2 Ongoing Review and Update of Public Information

Public information is subject to internal approval prior to publication. This process involves document sign off from various roles appropriate to the categories of information set out below. The protocols set out in 7.1 above, together with instructions set out in WI-003 Communications and Marketing are adhered to in all cases.

#### 7.2.1 Company Information (Profile and Relevant Corporate Information)

- The Managing Director is responsible for the regular review of company information in order to ensure that the SQT profile and relevant corporate information is up to date.
- Proposed updates are carried out by the Marketing Manager initially as draft updates.
- Draft updates are made live by the Marketing Manager following approval by the Managing Director.

#### 7.2.2 Programme Information

- The relevant Programme Director is responsible for the regular review of programme information in order to confirm the accuracy of all aspects of the programme documentation.
- Proposed updates are reviewed by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs. In the case of accredited programmes, this review confirms that the information is accurate and fulfils the obligations of each awarding body. Where necessary proposed changes are further reviewed with the Programme Director prior to final sign off.

- The Accreditation and Systems Manager is responsible for carrying out the updates to all programme information in accordance with WI45: Brochure Updates work instruction and Brochure Update Checklist (R31).

### **7.2.3 Marketing and Promotional Material**

- The Marketing Manager is responsible for the development of promotional material for the organisation. This may be communicated through a variety of platforms such as the website, email campaigns, social media and third parties promoting SQT courses. Programme information used for marketing is taken directly from approved course brochures only.
- The Director of Quality and Academic Affairs approves specific aspects of promotional material which concern obligations with respect to awarding bodies.

### **7.2.4 Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures**

- SQT's quality assurance documentation (policies, procedures, guidelines, work instructions and associated resources) are maintained by the document owner on the organisation's document platform. This person is identifiable in the document control section of each document. Relevant documents are linked to SQT's website by the Accreditation and Systems Manager and Moodle after documents are approved internally. This ensures that the most up to date documentation is publicly available.

### **7.2.5 QA Reports**

The Director of Quality and Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring the publication of reports from QA or accredited programme evaluations. This includes, but is not limited to, programme validation, programme revalidation, institutional review and reengagement activities.

## 8 POLICY MONITORING

Responsibility	Frequency	Methods
Director of Quality and Academic Affairs – Document Update	Per QA audit schedule	- Review of documentation as set out in QAP2-1: Ongoing Review and Update of QA Documents.
Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Annual	- Annual audit of a sample of programme and QA documentation to ensure that published information is accurate

## 9 DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No	Approval Date	Description of Revision	Originator	Approved By
1.0	14/12/18	Complete revision and new document format	Senior Management Team	Academic Council