

Policy and Process for Approval of Public Information



Purpose

This policy and process exists to ensure public information is communicated in the context of legislation and best practice guidelines, whilst supporting the aims of the organisation and the needs of the intended audiences.

Scope

This policy and process covers information published in digital or printed form, which refers to academic programmes, services, corporate strategy and policy. It does not cover letters (other than in a student recruitment context), verbal communication, teaching and learning materials, staff recruitment advertisements, or the output of research and scholarly activity (other than that used for marketing purposes).

Objectives

To ensure that all stakeholders acting on behalf of Hartpury University and Hartpury College provide accurate, appropriate and timely public information, which benefits the reputation of the institution.

1. Publication of Student Recruitment Information:

Information relating to Hartpury University and Hartpury College courses is published on the public-facing website, within the appropriate prospectus, and across associated printed and digital marketing materials and third-party websites.

Review of student recruitment information

Student recruitment related information, including information on existing and new courses, is reviewed and updated annually (HE) or periodically (FE), in-line with the requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Office for Students/Department for Education guidance for the publication of timely, accurate material across all appropriate channels.

During the review and revision process, programme/course managers together with their Heads of Department and other stakeholders (e.g. Finance, Accommodation, Admissions etc) are asked to review their student recruitment information. The latest copy will be provided in the appropriate format for revision and within agreed timescales by Marketing. It is the stakeholders' responsibility to check the information remains accurate and/or provide any amendments required within the agreed timescales, checking with colleagues as appropriate.

The information is likely to be edited by Marketing staff, to ensure consistency of tone and message for the relevant audiences and channels; where significant changes are made, this will be passed back to the relevant stakeholder before publication.

Where significant changes are made, before the information is published it will be signed off by the stakeholder, Marketing staff and, where relevant, member(s) of the Executive in accordance with **Appendix A**.

In-year changes to student recruitment information

In-year changes are those applied during the current recruitment cycle, affecting the forthcoming intake of students.

Such changes are discouraged, since they often instigate wide-reaching changes to student contracts, for instance if the change is deemed to materially alter a course, in which case detailed information about such changes must be communicated to all

current applicants and offer-holders, in line with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) enforced legislation.

For this reason, Marketing will not amend the contractual components of university course information unless it has been approved through the official Curriculum Amendments processes, overseen by the academic registry.

For all university student recruitment information change requests (in-year), a Manager or Head of Department will be required to complete a '*Changes to Student Recruitment Information*' digital form, to notify Admissions, Marketing, Outreach and the Curriculum Records teams so related materials can be updated and disseminated, both internally and externally.

For all college student recruitment information change requests (in-year), the Deputy Principal (FE) must provide approval and authorisation.

2. Release of Information to the Media:

All press releases, advertorial copy and proactive or reactive media statements must be written and/or reviewed and approved by the Hartpury Marketing department, before 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 and newsletters.

Prior to the release of any information to the media, it will be passed back to the stakeholder for signoff. 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 quoted is accurate and appropriate to the audience before they supply or approve it.

The Marketing department will work with the most relevant media and co-ordinate the dissemination of this information, using software as appropriate (e.g. Kantar Media Monitoring) to maximise and evaluate impact. Stakeholders may also recommend suitable specialist publications for consideration.

If a member of Hartpury staff is contacted by the media requesting an interview, comment or to be filmed or photographed, this request must be passed to the Marketing department for approval. The same is true of filming or broadcast requests on Hartpury property, either in order to film Hartpury related activities or for use of the campus as a location.

The only exception to this rule is when staff are attending a sporting fixture and a member of the media requests an interview at that time, e.g. immediately post-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 Hartpury.

3. Social Media:

Hartpury University, Hartpury College and its many facets are represented by a number of social media channels. The Marketing department oversee and schedule all content on the main official channels, whilst dedicated members of staff across the institution are account owners for the various departmental social media channels (e.g. agriculture, equine, animal and specific sports accounts etc), in-line with the *Hartpury Social Media Guidelines*. The Marketing department periodically audit all Hartpury-wide social media accounts and provide advice and training to account owners.

Some social media content will reflect press releases and other information provided to the media, and therefore will have been through the sign-off processes described above (point 2). However most content is not news-related, but instead a real-time opportunity to engage key audiences with Hartpury life, via both account owners' posts and user-generated content. Due to its fast-paced nature, day-to-day responsibility for social media content and engagement lies with each account holder.

All account owners are reminded that they are acting as ambassadors for Hartpury on social media; their posts may be far-reaching and quoted in both social and traditional media. Social media accounts linked to Hartpury must not be used to express personal or political views. They must not engage with controversial enquiries or extreme opinions on social media, but instead contact the Marketing department at the earliest opportunity for advice and guidance, which may include taking the discussion offline.

In the event of a crisis PR situation, account owners and other Hartpury staff must not comment on social media. Instead, the Marketing department must be contacted for advice before any response is provided. This ensures the Director of Marketing and Communications can align all crisis communications and messages, working with members of the Executive and Vice-Chancellor/Principal as required.

4. Approvals Process:

No information should be published in the public domain without stakeholder(s) approval and approval from the Marketing department (with the exception of certain social media). Where necessary member of the Executive team.

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. They should also be provided with adequate time for approval and advised of the time schedule from the outset.

All stakeholders are accepting responsibility for statements being factually accurate, reasonable, verifiable, and compliant with relevant legislation. To ensure accuracy, they are advised to query any information they are unsure about with the sender and/or refer it back to someone with the appropriate knowledge or expertise.

Stakeholder(s) sign off should be provided in writing (digital or printed as appropriate). A copy will be held within Marketing 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.

Appendix A: Stakeholder approval process

The Hartpury staff members identified below have responsibility for the approval as described.

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. <p>Departmental information including staff profiles, news stories and wider student experience.</p>	Heads of Department
Research and knowledge exchange.	Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange
Sports activities and academies.	Director of Elite Sport
<p>Accurate descriptions of services, facilities and associated procedures.</p> <p>Information about services provided, pricing, availability of services, administrative procedures.</p>	Deputy Principal Resources or nominated authorising group
References to fees, bursaries, loans, and other financial awards.	Chief Operating Officer or nominated authorising group
Confirmation of the approval status of award titles for approved programmes (HE only).	Academic Registrar
Entry requirements, application and admissions procedures for UK and international students.	Head of Admissions

Stage 2: Quality

The overall quality of public information is the responsibility of the Director of Marketing and Communications

Stage 3: Final approval

Final approval of student recruitment related information lies with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (HE) and Deputy Principal (FE).

Stage 4: Media related final approval

Final approval lies with the Director or Marketing and Communications, and the Vice-Chancellor/Principal.

Glossary

Stakeholder

By stakeholder, we mean a person with the authority to agree a statement or piece of text. 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.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As with all Hartpury policies and procedures, due care has been taken to ensure that this policy is appropriate to all members of staff regardless of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender status.

The policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst upholding Hartpury's commitment to providing equality to all. If any employee feels that this or any other policy does not meet this aim, please contact the HR Department.

Hartpury is committed towards promoting positive mental health by working towards the MINDFUL EMPLOYER Charter. Hartpury aims to create a culture of support within the workplace where employees can talk about mental health problems without the fear of stigma or discrimination.

Approval and Review Cycle

Date Last Approved	November 2021
Policy Owner	Director of Marketing and Communications
Approving Committee	SMT/ Executive
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