



Oakswood College

Empowering Through Education



Student Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Policy

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GOVERNANCE



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Student Information, Advice and Guidance Policy (IAG)

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Legal and Regulatory References

- Office for Students – Regulation of Quality and Standards; Conditions of Registration: B Conditions (Quality, Reliable Standards and Positive Outcomes for all Students); C Conditions (Protecting the Interests of All Students, in particular, C5 (Treating Students Fairly); Condition E2 (Student Support & Success); Condition E6 (Preventing and Addressing Harassment & Sexual Misconduct) and Freedom of Speech requirements; CMA Consumer Law Advice for Higher Education Providers (2023).
- OIAHE Good Practice Framework
 - Supporting disabled students - OIAHE
 - Support for study processes - OIAHE (Annex 1)
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education
 - Quality Code - Advice and Guidance 2024 (in particular, Support for Students, Enabling Student Achievement, Information Provision, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion)
- DfE matrix Standard for Information, Advice and Guidance¹
- The Career Development Institute

1. Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of the Student Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) policy is to ensure that all students have access to accurate, impartial, timely, and accessible support throughout their educational journey.

This includes providing guidance on academic matters, personal wellbeing, career planning, financial advice, and other areas that may impact a student's ability to succeed and progress. The matrix standard set by the Department of Education (DfE) is used by the College to ensure that IAG is high quality and its impact on students can be measured.

The objectives of Oakswood College's Student Information, Advice & Guidance Policy are:

- To empower prospective and current students to make informed decisions to achieve their study, career, and personal goals.
- To support student success, progression and retention.

¹ The matrix Standard is owned by the Department for Education. It is the national quality standard for organisations designed to ensure the management and delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance services. Its aim is to support individuals regarding career, learning, work and life goals by helping associated services to provide the best support. More information (including matrix Standard assessment for FE, HE and sixth form colleges) can be found in the UK Government Guidance notes [here](#).

- To ensure consistent, high quality, inclusive, and accessible guidance across the student lifecycle.
- To provide services supporting students with additional needs enabling students to overcome potential barriers to study.
- To ensure that the delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance which is responsive to changes and developments within Oakwood College and in the external environment.
- To create a policy understood by staff and effectively applied ensuring an inclusive offer.
- To support compliance with OfS requirements and the OIA's Good Practice Principles.

2. Core Definitions

Information: Self-service resources (e.g., online guides, policies, FAQs) that promote independent choice-making.

Advice: Staff-led support to help interpret complex options or policies relevant to a student's individual circumstances.

Guidance: In-depth, personalised support, including referrals and learning-centred collaboration.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all students and applicants, at all stages-pre-entry, on-course, and progression. It covers information, advice and guidance relevant to:

- Admissions
- Academic life and learning
- Student Support and Wellbeing (including referral to specialist support and health advice)
- Money Advice
- Visa compliance
- Careers and Employability

4. Related Documents and Policies

- ✓ Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access Policy
- ✓ Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- ✓ Complaints and Appeals Policies
- ✓ Safeguarding and Duty of Care Policy and Procedure
- ✓ Prevent Policy
- ✓ Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- ✓ Student Attendance and Engagement Policy
- ✓ Academic Regulations Policy

5. Student Information, Advice & Guidance

Our Institutional Aims

Oakwood College takes a student-centred, joined-up approach to Information, Advice and Guidance, recognising that the quality of support available to students at every stage of their journey is central to their ability to succeed and progress. Our approach is grounded in the principles of the OIA Good Practice Framework and the Matrix Standard and is shaped by our institutional commitment to widening participation and social mobility.

We recognise that our students bring diverse backgrounds, needs, and aspirations to their studies. Our IAG provision is therefore designed to be individualised and responsive, ensuring that each student receives support that is relevant to their particular circumstances, whether they are a prospective applicant, an enrolled student navigating academic challenges, or a learner planning their next steps into higher education or employment.

We take a collaborative, whole-institution approach to IAG. Rather than treating it as the responsibility of a single team or service, we embed guidance into every stage of the student experience, from admissions through to progression, with academic staff, student services, and specialist support working together in a coordinated way. This joined-up model ensures that students receive consistent, accurate, and timely information, and that no student falls through the gaps between services.

Our institutional commitments in this regard are as follows.

5.1. Institutional Commitments

- To ensure services are tailored to each stage of the student journey and respect individual needs.
- To ensure provision of impartial, accessible IAG aligned with the matrix quality standard.
- To use the IAG standard to monitor EDI measures and take action to address any gaps in recruitment and attainment of students.
- To embed continuous improvement through feedback, training, quality monitoring, and technology adoption.

- To safeguard the protection of student data per privacy protocols.
- To embed IAG delivery through formal policies in the academic regulations (e.g., welfare, attendance, mitigating circumstances, appeals).
- To ensure staff have opportunities for training, skills and knowledge development appropriate to their roles.
- To explore and adopt innovative and digital technology as appropriate and relevant in line with Oakwood Colleges strategic plans.
- To identify key internal and external points of contact, such as staff in different departments, or external agencies, to inform and support the provision of Information, Advice and Guidance.

6. Delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance

Below is a description of how Oakwood College manages the delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance:

(a) Material Information

Oakwood College publishes accurate and up-to-date course information covering entry requirements, fees, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and progression routes. This information is available via the college website, prospectus, and student handbooks, in line with Consumer Protection Law requirements and OfS Condition C5 (Treating Students Fairly). Any material changes to courses or services are communicated to affected students promptly and in writing, with appropriate support offered to those impacted.

(b) Induction and Enrolment

All new students receive a structured induction programme that introduces them to academic expectations, support services, college policies, and their rights and responsibilities as students. International students receive dedicated sessions covering visa compliance, reporting obligations, and the resources available to support their transition to study in the UK.

(c) Student Consultations

Where the college proposes any material changes affecting students, it will undertake appropriate consultation with the student body prior to implementation, via student representatives, surveys, or open sessions. Outcomes of consultations are communicated to students with reasons for decisions taken.

(d) One-to-One Guidance and Advice

Students may access one-to-one advice and guidance appointments through their personal tutor, student services, and designated departmental contacts. Academic guidance covers study skills, progression planning, and academic performance. Non-academic guidance covers

personal wellbeing, financial concerns, attendance difficulties, and referral to specialist services where appropriate.

(e) Disabled Students and Students with Additional Needs

Oakwood College is committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students and those with additional needs can fully access IAG provision. Students are encouraged to disclose relevant needs at the point of application or as early as possible during their studies, so that appropriate support arrangements can be put in place. This includes learning support plans, examination adjustments, and referral to specialist support services.

(f) Procedural Guidance

Clear information on student-facing procedures including complaints, academic appeals, mitigating circumstances, and fitness to study is provided in the student handbook, on the college website, and through personal tutors and student services. Staff are trained to advise students on their rights and the processes available to them, and to signpost to independent support (including the OIA) where relevant.

7. Delivery Channels

IAG at Oakwood College is delivered through the following channels and resources:

- ✓ **Student Services** provides a central point of contact for wellbeing support, financial advice, disability and learning support, and signposting to specialist internal and external services. Students can access support through drop-in sessions, by appointment, and via the college's online enquiry system. Information regarding available support is available on the College website, in the Student Handbook and from college staff. The College's Support Through Studies is in place, where appropriate prior to enrolment, to support students to best succeed and achieve their potential.
- ✓ **Academic and Teaching Staff** deliver course-level information, academic guidance, and learning support as part of their teaching and personal tutor responsibilities. Lecturers and programme leaders are the first point of contact for subject-specific and progression queries.
- ✓ **Admissions Team** provides pre-entry information and advice to prospective students on course options, entry requirements, application processes, and financial support. This includes information delivered at open days, taster sessions, and through direct correspondence.
- ✓ **Online and Digital Resources** include the College website, the virtual learning environment (VLE), and the student portal, which host course guides, policy

documents, FAQs, tutorial videos, and links to external support agencies. These resources are available to students at all times and kept up to date by relevant departments. Internal and external audits take place to ensure that online and digital resources remain current and fit for purpose.

- ✓ **Careers and Employability Support** is available to all students and covers career planning, CV writing, interview preparation, work placement guidance, and higher education progression advice. Careers sessions are embedded within the curriculum and available as standalone workshops.
- ✓ **Financial Guidance** is provided by designated staff and covers student finance entitlements, bursaries, hardship fund applications, and budgeting support.
- ✓ **Group and Workshop-Based Support** includes skills workshops, study skills sessions, and topic-specific information events. These are delivered throughout the academic year, with proactive outreach to students identified as at risk of disengaging.

Academic oversight of the above activities is provided by the College's Academic Board; general oversight is provided by the Senior Management Team and led by key Heads of Department as applicable to the context.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

(a) Senior Management

The CEO holds overall accountability for the quality and compliance of IAG provision across the college. The Head of Governance, Quality, Compliance & Information Systems is the Policy Owner and is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed in line with the stated review cycle. Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that adequate resource, staffing, and training are in place to deliver IAG to the required standard.

(b) Student Services and Support Staff

Student services staff are responsible for the day-to-day delivery of non-academic IAG, including wellbeing support, financial guidance, disability and additional needs assessments, and referrals to specialist internal and external services. They are responsible for maintaining accurate records of interactions and outcomes, and for contributing to quality monitoring processes.

(c) Academic Staff

Lecturers and programme leaders are responsible for providing accurate course-level information to students, delivering academic guidance through tutorial and personal tutor arrangements, and identifying students who may benefit from referral to additional support.

Academic staff are responsible for keeping students informed of any changes to their programme of study and for signposting them to relevant resources and procedures.

(d) Students

Students are responsible for engaging with IAG services and resources made available to them, for providing accurate information to enable staff to support them effectively, and for raising concerns or queries in a timely manner. Students are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning and progression planning and to utilise available support before difficulties escalate.

(e) Procedural Decision Makers

Staff with responsibilities for student-facing procedures such as academic appeals, complaints, non-academic misconduct, academic misconduct, mitigating/extenuating circumstances, and Support Through Studies are responsible for ensuring that students receive clear, accurate, and timely information about those processes, their rights within them, and the support available to them at each procedural stage. Decisions made under any student-related procedures should be underpinned with clear reasoning and rationales, and clearly communicated to the student.

9. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Oakwood College is committed to ensuring that IAG provision is equitable, inclusive, and accessible to all members of its community. This commitment is underpinned by the college's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which sets out the college's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The College recognises that equality and equity are distinct but complementary. Equality means treating everyone with fairness and respect and removing barriers to participation. Equity means recognising that students have different circumstances and allocating support and resources to address disadvantage and achieve fair outcomes. Both principles apply to the design and delivery of IAG services.

IAG provision at Oakwood College is designed to eliminate barriers to access and support for students from under-represented or disadvantaged groups, including disabled students, students with additional learning needs, mature learners, and international students. Support arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and targeted outreach are used to address gaps in engagement and attainment identified through equality data.

Staff involved in delivering IAG undertake mandatory training on EDI, including bystander awareness, inclusive practice, and reasonable adjustments, in line with the training requirements set out in the EDI Policy. This ensures guidance is delivered without discrimination and with an understanding of the diverse needs of the student population.

Data on IAG interactions and outcomes is disaggregated by protected characteristics and other relevant student attributes to monitor equity of access. Where data identifies disproportionate patterns in engagement or outcomes, targeted action is developed and reviewed through the college's EDI monitoring processes, as described in Section 11 of the EDI Policy.

Students who have concerns about how IAG services have treated them in relation to equality, diversity or inclusion may raise these through the college's Student Complaints Procedure, in accordance with the processes set out in the EDI Policy (Section 9).

10. Data, Privacy & Safeguarding

- All IAG interactions must respect privacy and data protection (aligned with student privacy notices and guidelines).
- Safeguarding considerations must embed in support provision, especially for vulnerable individuals.

11. Communication and Promotion

Oakwood College uses a range of channels to ensure that IAG is effectively communicated and accessible to all students at each stage of their journey.

Pre-Entry: Prospective students receive information about courses, entry requirements, fees, financial support, and available services through the college website, prospectus, open day events, and direct correspondence with the admissions team. The college ensures that material information is presented clearly, accurately, and in compliance with Consumer Protection Law.

Induction: All students receive a structured induction at the start of their programme that introduces them to the college's support services, key policies, academic expectations, and the resources available to them. Induction materials are provided digitally and in print, and sessions are designed to be accessible and interactive.

On-Course: During their studies, students are kept informed of available IAG through the student portal, VLE, email communications, notice boards, and regular updates from their personal tutors and programme teams. Scheduled workshops, drop-in sessions, and one-to-one appointments are promoted through these channels on an ongoing basis.

Student Handbook: The student handbook serves as a central reference point for IAG-related information, covering services available, key contacts, relevant policies and procedures, and guidance on rights and responsibilities. It is reviewed and updated annually.

Targeted Communications: Where specific groups of students may benefit from particular services, the college undertakes proactive, targeted outreach through student services and

academic teams. This includes communications to students identified as at risk, students approaching key progression points, and students with disclosed additional needs.

12. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed biannually by the Policy Owner in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Reviews take account of any changes to OfS Conditions of Registration, the OIA Good Practice Framework, the QAA Quality Code, and the matrix Standard. Where significant regulatory or sector changes occur between scheduled reviews, an interim review will be triggered. All revisions are subject to approval through the Board of Governors.

Service Quality Monitoring

The quality of IAG provision is monitored through student satisfaction surveys, feedback gathered through personal tutors and student services, and module and programme-level feedback mechanisms. Data is collated, analysed, and reported to the Senior Leadership Team on a termly basis, with actions identified to address any areas of concern.

Student Voice and Engagement

Student feedback on IAG provision is actively sought through the Student Representatives structure, the annual student experience survey, and periodic focus groups or consultation events. Findings inform service development and are reported back to students as part of the college's commitment to closing the feedback loop.

Procedural Oversight

The college maintains oversight of formal student-related procedures including complaints, academic appeals, and mitigating circumstances, monitoring volumes, outcomes, and timescales to identify systemic issues and areas for improvement. Completion of Procedures letters are issued in a timely manner to enable students to exercise their right to escalate complaints to the OIA where appropriate.

EDI Monitoring

IAG data is disaggregated by protected characteristics and other relevant student attributes to monitor equity of access and outcomes. This feeds into the college's EDI reporting and its Access and Participation commitments.

Matrix Standard

The College works towards and maintains alignment with the Matrix Standard as the national benchmark for IAG quality, using the standard's framework to structure self-assessment and continuous improvement activity.

Contact Information:

For any queries on this Policy, please contact:

Head of Student Services

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