



MERCIA PARTNERSHIP

Information, Advice and Guidance Policy

Policy Aims & Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to staff and stakeholders, including subcontractors and their staff, on the importance of good quality and embedded Information, advice and guidance in meeting our company core values and achievement of key performance indicators.

Aim

The aim of IAG is to ensure that all clients have equal access to impartial information, advice and guidance and are supported in their chosen progression opportunities.

Company Vision, Missions & Values

The aim of IAG is to ensure that all service users have equal access to impartial information, advice and guidance and are supported in their chosen progression opportunities.

We work with young people and employers to deliver life changing employment opportunities and provide outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.

Our values are:

SKILLS – SUPPORT – SUCCESS

Our mission statement:

“We aim to provide the highest quality teaching and learning to every apprentice every time and be the employer’s provider of choice.”

Company Targets

80% Success Rates Minimum

Minimum 90% success rates of good teaching, learning and assessment

Less than 5% error rates at internal and external audit

Financially sound with year on year growth of +10%

Clients

Mercia’s clients are:

- Internal staff
- Applicants/Apprentices
- Employers
- Partners

IAG Objectives

Explicit:

- 100% of Learners receive an entitlement to objective Information Advice & Guidance at the start of programmes
- 100% of Learners receive IAG throughout their programmes – evidenced through learner progress reviews and exit guidance
- 100% of employers receive IAG before taking on an apprentice

Implicit:

- 85% of Learners are retained on programmes as they received correct IAG for their needs (retention)
- 80% of Learners succeed (success rates)
- 50% of Learners have positive destination data
- 100% of staff deliver quality IAG

What is CIAG and why is it important?

CIAG stands for Career Information, Advice and Guidance – a shorthand term for a range of vital services that help people to make important decisions about their future – Decisions which will ultimately support greater economic and social mobility.

Background

In 2010 the Government set out the vision for skills reform in 'Skills for Sustainable Growth' the key elements are:

- Students at the heart of the FE and skills system
- First-class advice delivered by the National Careers Service
- A ladder of opportunity of comprehensive vocational education and training
- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Relevant and focused learning programmes and qualifications
- Strategic governance for a dynamic FE sector
- Freedoms and flexibilities
- Funding priorities through a simplified funding system
- Empowered students making informed choices
- Global FE

In addition, 'New Challenges, New Chances' emphasises the importance of high quality information about careers and skills, and independent, professional advice and guidance for people who need it most & play a vital part of an efficient labour market which drives growth.

The organisation is committed to delivering high quality IAG services to ensure these key elements are achieved.

Responsibilities

Mercia Partnership are passionate about education and enabling clients to reach their potential. Staff seek specially to develop the self-esteem and self-confidence of students. We share the belief that every individual should be treated with courtesy and fairness, and we respect the rights and beliefs of each other, regardless of gender, marital status, age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or position within the organisation.

We value new ideas and approaches and seek new opportunities and solutions to meeting the IAG needs and demands for our clients and the local community. We seek to encourage and celebrate creativity and to be supportive of innovation, learning from all that we do. We believe that our staff and students should work in an environment of friendliness, with a clear sense of purpose to achieve our mission and realise our vision.

How is IAG delivered?

IAG is delivered using variety of methods including:

- Face-to-face discussion/interviews
- Via telephone
- On the Internet

What are the differences between Information, Advice and Guidance?

Information:

Information on learning and work opportunities conveyed through printed matter, audio visual materials or computer software, or through information officer's in careers or other helpline services such as the National Careers Service and Find An Apprenticeship.

Advice:

Providing an immediate response to the needs of clients, who present an enquiry or reveal a need that requires more than a straight forward information response. It is usually limited to helping with the interpretation of information and with meeting needs already clearly understood by the client and may include signposting to a guidance interview where a more in depth response can be provided.

Guidance:

An in-depth interview or other activity conducted by a trained advisor which helps clients to explore a range of options, to relate information to their own needs and circumstances and to make decisions about their career (i.e. their progression in learning and work).

Core Services

Core information, advice and guidance services will include the following, as appropriate for the individual:

- Interpreting any information and considering personal circumstances;
- An individualised service tailored to users' needs;
- Personalised information including possible referral to in-depth services;
- Helping users to link their personal interests and/or skills to their desired job/career requirements;
- Identifying basic skills needs and referring those clients to sources of help in gaining basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT;
- Meaningful interpretation of Market Information and Intelligence;
- Advice on the financial and other support available to applicants/apprentices
- Advice on job search methods (CV, interview skills, applications for employability sessions);
- Considering possible progression paths, personalising options; knowing what is and is not available and/or possible and discussing alternatives.
- Helping users access technology to aid their progression

Marketing

Mercia Partnership will provide sufficient marketing materials about its services and make these available to all. These will consist of information about available learning programmes, website updates and information that may be of use to the sector, learning materials and handouts.

Information will be reviewed as programmes change and on an annual basis.

Resources

Information materials will be accurate and up to date, impartial and free from bias, and will identify the version number and date to ensure all are using the most recent information materials available.

- All software used will be up to date and fully licensed.
- All staff will be kept up to date with the range of information materials available

When will IAG be provided?

IAG will be provided at 3 stages:

- "New SKILLSs stage" - at the recruitment stage i.e. initial assessment and induction
- "SUPPORT stage" - Progress Reviews or on an ongoing basis
- "SUCCESS stage" - end of programme

Who provides IAG at Mercia Partnership and its subcontractors?

All staff will play a part in the delivery of IAG as follows:

- Administration staff will receive enquiries about services on offer and therefore must be aware of the services and products available and who to transfer the caller to for an efficient service to be provided.
- The Employer Engagement Managers (EEM) will play a fundamental part in the provision of IAG to employers although they may provide IAG to members of the public making initial enquiries. IAG is provided by phone and at arranged meetings.
- The sales team will also provide IAG at network meetings and marketing events.
- The Learner Engagement Co-Ordinator plays a large part in the provision of IAG to potential learners as they are responsible for carrying out initial assessment and job seeking assistance with learners providing IAG around the individual's needs and circumstances. IAG will also be provided at induction, progress reviews and end of programme, however, it is likely that Learning & Development Coaches (LDCs) will provide IAG throughout the duration of the programme.
- LDCs will make referrals for additional learner support or sign post the learner to other organisations that may be more appropriate to meet their needs.
- LDCs and EEMs may also provide IAG to employers about existing or new services and products.
- IAG is not only provided to external customers but also to internal customers.
- Staff are provided with IAG from their line manager in respect of their own personal and career development at supervision and appraisal and on an ongoing basis.

Partnerships and Networks

Mercia Partnership recognise that a key element of IAG is signposting and referral. We believe that relationships with other providers bring added value to our service.

Partners include, National Careers Service, Work Based Learning Providers, Specialist drug and alcohol agencies, Further Education establishments, Government departments, career guidance specialists, and local colleges.

Recording of IAG

'SKILLS' - Initial IAG will be recorded on the clients individual learning plan (ILP) and a Record of Learner Progress (Review) form. Employer needs are recorded by EEMs.

'SUPPORT' - IAG will be recorded on the ILP, Review, or an individual action plan as appropriate.

'SUCCESS' - IAG will be recorded on the ILP, exit Review or an individual action plan as appropriate.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, using client feedback and evaluations as well input from delivery staff. In addition, IAG will form part of regular standardisation meetings.

The policy will be reviewed by the Head of Quality & Performance.

IAG Principles

These principles are adapted from the National IAG Board Principles.

Be Accessible and Visible

IAG services that are recognised and trusted by students, have convenient entry points from which students may be signposted or referred to the services which most closely meet their needs and are open at times and in places which suit student's needs.

Be Professional and Knowledgeable

IAG frontline staff will have the skills and knowledge to identify quickly and effectively the student's needs. They will have the skills and knowledge either to address the student's needs or to signpost or to refer them to suitable alternative provision.

Have Effective Connections

Links between IAG services should be clear from the student's perspective. Where necessary, students are supported in their transition between services.

Ensure that the Availability, Quality and Delivery of IAG services is targeted

at the needs of students, and be informed by social and economic priorities at local, regional and national levels.

Recognise Diversity

in the range of IAG services which will reflect the diversity of student's needs.

Be Impartial

IAG services which support students to make informed decisions about learning and work based on the student's needs and circumstances.

Be Responsive

to present and future needs of students.

Be Friendly

welcoming IAG services which encourage students to engage successfully with the service

Be Enabling

Services which encourage and support students to become lifelong learners by enabling them to access and use information to plan their careers.