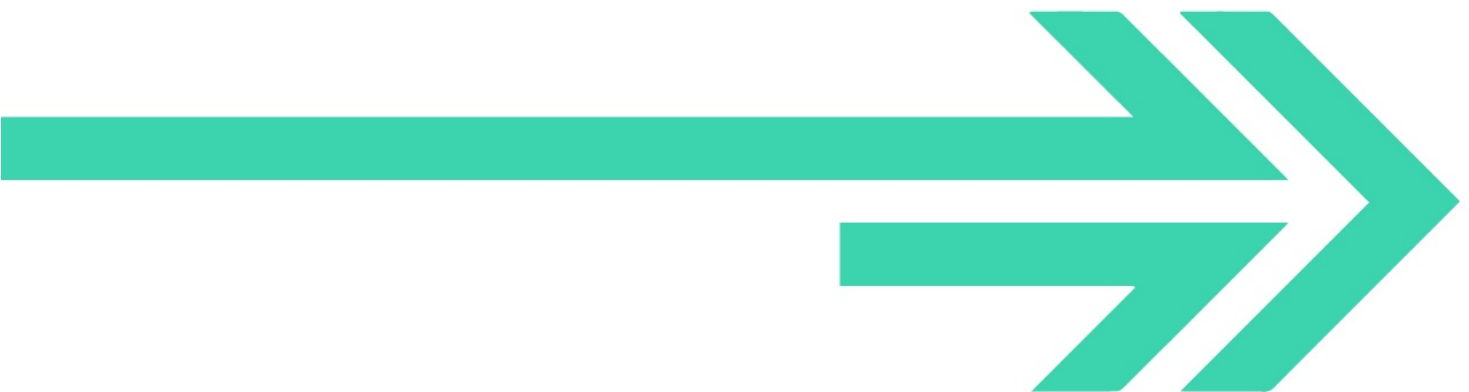




HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT RECRUITMENT POLICY



Document version	Last updated	Updated by	Date of next review
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1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct outlines QA Higher Education's (QAHE's) position on key matters relating to marketing and student recruitment.

It complies with relevant legislation and is a public document for:

- QAHE Staff
- Representatives of QAHE
- Applicants
- Students
- University Partners

The Code of Conduct is informed by the ten indicators set out in the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B2 – Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education), and the good practice guides published by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA).

2. Purpose

To provide policy information to enquirers, applicants, parents and advisors about marketing and student recruitment at QA Higher Education. It is the policy framework for all staff who are involved in marketing and student recruitment activity.

3. Scope

This policy covers applications for places on courses run by QAHE in partnership with UK universities. These typically lead to awards at Foundation (Level 3), Undergraduate or Postgraduate level. Courses may be offered in full-time, part-time, distance learning or blended mode.

4. Ethical Framework

This policy is based around a framework provided by the British Council "London Statement" (March 2012). QAHE requires all staff and representatives of QAHE staff to observe this framework in the process of recruiting, marketing and admitting students.

- **Integrity** - being straightforward and honest in all professional and business dealings;
- **Objectivity** - not allowing professional judgment to be compromised by bias or conflict of interest;
- **Professional competence and due care** - maintaining professional knowledge and professional service, and acting diligently;
- **Transparency** - declaring conflicts of interest to all parties, especially when service fees are charged to both the education provider and the applicant;
- **Confidentiality** - respecting and preserving the confidentiality of personal information acquired and not releasing such information to third parties without proper authority. This includes compliance with all relevant Data Regulations, such as GDPR (2018).
- **Professional behaviour** – acting in accordance with relevant laws and regulations and dealing with applicants, students and agents competently, diligently and fairly; and



- **Professionalism and purpose** - acting in a manner that will serve the interests of applicants, students, representatives and the wider society even at the expense of self-interest; recognising that dedication to these principles is the means by which the profession can earn the trust and confidence of stakeholder groups (individual clients, the public, business and government).

5. Ethical Principles

Specific principles that should be observed from the framework are outlined below:

- QAHE Staff and Representatives practice responsible business ethics.
- QAHE Staff and Representatives provide current, accurate and honest information in an ethical manner.
- QAHE Staff and Representatives develop transparent business relationships with students and providers through the use of written agreements.
- QAHE Staff and Representatives protect the interests of minors.
- QAHE Staff and Representatives provide current and up-to-date information that enables applicants and students to make informed choices when selecting which representative or consultant to employ.
- QAHE Staff and Representatives act professionally.
- QAHE Staff and Representatives work with source countries and university partners to raise ethical standards and best practice.

6. Equality and Diversity

QAHE is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of its community, including those that seek to apply to study with us, are treated with respect and dignity. We aim to create a culture of diversity within our community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)
- Gender (including gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity)
- Religion, belief
- Sexual orientation (including civil partnership status)



8. Responsibility for Marketing and Recruitment

QA Higher Education is committed to providing a professional marketing and student recruitment service to all our applicants.

Marketing and student recruitment activities are often carried out in partnership with our university partners.

Responsibility for Marketing and Recruitment within QA Higher Education is as follows:

Marketing & Recruitment Director

- International Recruitment – Director of International Recruitment
- Marketing – Director of Marketing & Communications
- Admissions – Head of Admissions
- Partnerships and Propositions – Head of Partnerships and Propositions

Institutional Relationship Director

- Home and EU Recruitment
- Direct Recruitment – Head of Direct Recruitment

9. Published Information

We take a series of steps to ensure that the materials we publish concerning our provisions are accurate and meet all relevant regulations, including the guidance from CMA, QAA, British Council, UKVI and ASA amongst others. QAHE's Marketing Team works closely with counterparts at each of our partner institutions to ensure university oversight on our activities and materials as appropriate.

QAHE's responsibility for providing accurate and up to date information about its programmes starts with the provision of information to prospective students during the recruitment and admissions process. From a Marketing and Recruitment perspective, post-application this responsibility extends to information provided in the lead up to enrolment.

Core published information channels used for marketing are the prospectuses and QAHE managed websites/web content.

All course-specific information is produced using our internal 'Product Sheets'. These provide a central resource containing all of the information relating to each of the programmes offered. Use of these sheets includes development of paper and digital marketing collateral, together with guidance to recruitment team members for conversations with prospective students, applicants and agents.

A Product Sheet contains detailed information about:

- Course content including modules, assessment methods, and any accreditations
- Level
- Delivery mode
- Validated locations
- Validated intakes
- Academic contacts at QAHE and the awarding partner



- Duration
- Tuition fees and any additional costs
- Contact hours and self-study requirements
- Entry criteria

The creation, upkeep and sign off of these Product Sheets follows a documented process (maintained by the Marketing Team) to ensure accuracy and oversight from the awarding partner. Each Product Sheet is fully completed and signed off by both QAHE and the partner prior to courses being taken to market. This ensures that the information provided to all stakeholders, including students, is consistent and accurate. If any information relating to the programme is changed, it is updated on the Product Sheet first which is then signed off, before the update is reflected across any relevant materials.

A version control process has been implemented to record any changes or updates to the course content. Version numbers are added to all Product Sheets to enable QAHE to revert back to previous versions, and track changes, along with auditing who made the change and references to any queries presented as a result of changes. This process is essential for collaborative development between the partner and QAHE. It serves as a mechanism for due diligence for all programmes offered and any published information generated to promote them.

Additional marketing materials

Our Marketing Team work very closely with university counterparts to ensure that all materials are brand compliant. We do this in a number of ways:

- **Brand guidelines, templates and asset sharing**
Our partners supply QAHE with brand guidelines and are briefed on any brand updates. Key documents are shared by the partner with any accolades, statistics or messages to be used in marketing materials. Native design files for templates are also utilised between QAHE and partners to facilitate brand consistency.
- **Suppliers**
Where appropriate, if work is being outsourced by QAHE, the Marketing Team will look to identify suppliers who already work with our partner. This allows us to work effectively with agencies and suppliers who are already familiar with the branding requirements and where possible to re-purpose layouts that have previously been used by the partner.
- **Sign off processes**
The QAHE Marketing Team are in regular contact with the Marketing Teams across our different partners. When new materials are produced, these are sent to the relevant team/individual to ensure we obtain partner approval.

10. Course Specifications

The QAHE Marketing Team are trained on the CMA requirements for Higher Education Institutions and regularly review all course-specific marketing materials produced to ensure that they satisfy the requirements from providers.



Consideration is also given to the requirements for other regulatory and accreditation bodies (e.g. British Council for English language courses).

These details are largely driven by the information detailed in corresponding Product Sheets. It is recognised that there are two levels of information: essential and desirable. Essential is the information that must be supplied for QAHE to market a course whereas desirable may not always be available when initially taking a course to market.

Examples of the information that sits in these categories are detailed below:

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course name• Awarding body• Level• Duration• Validated?• Study mode• Teaching location• Planned intakes• Tuition fees• Additional costs• Teaching methods/aids• Course overview• Modules (description, core/optional, credits)• Career/further study• Professional links/accreditations• Assessment methods• Academic and English language requirements• How to apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faculty• Contact hours per week• Self-study time per week• Class sizes (average and maximum)• Staff experience• Sample timetables / teaching hours• Module codes

Course information is made available to prospective students through a variety of media:

- Prospectuses
- Websites
- Time and date stamped course PDFs downloaded from the websites (only available for offerings with dedicated microsites managed by QAHE)
- Offer letters
- Event materials

All course-specific information covered in these, is pulled from the Product Sheets to ensure accuracy and consistency.

11. Process prior to application

Good practice in this context means the following:

- Provision of accurate information through publication of the prospectuses in print and on the web.
- Provision of clear information about how to make an enquiry by email; online form; phone; social media.



- A friendly, helpful, and prompt response to enquiries from prospective students.
- Trained and experienced recruitment staff with regional expertise to advise applicants accordingly.
- Representation at appropriate recruitment events to give prospective students the opportunity to speak to a member of QAHE staff in person.
- Use of the Application Management System (MOSA) and Enquiry Management System (AKERO) for collation and management of enquiry and application data.
- Actively engaging with enquirers to promote QAHE and its university partners as study destinations and to provide them with the information they need to convert them to high quality applicants.
- Supporting prospective students' advisers to help them research their options.

Good practice in student recruitment is based upon the collection of high quality enquirer and applicant data from prospective students, allowing prospective students to be supplied with information that is tailored to their own circumstances.

All QAHE staff involved in student recruitment activities should endeavour to collect fully complete enquirer and applicant data whenever interacting with prospective students, e.g. at recruitment events.

Enquirer data should be collected at all events attended on behalf of QAHE.

There should be a consistent approach across all methods of collecting enquirer data. Standardised fields, options, and drop-down lists should be used wherever possible. Such an approach allows for consistency of data on prospective students which in turn permits comparison and analysis. This is facilitated through the collection of data through our enquiry management system (AKERO). Collection of paper based information, or outside of the enquiry management system, is considered poor practice.

Prospective students visiting the QAHE and university partner websites, including university partner and course specific pages, should be encouraged to submit their data by completing enquiry forms. Data submitted via these forms will be automatically uploaded to the enquiry management system (AKERO).

12. Engaging with enquirers

Since enquirers are prospective students who have actively expressed an interest in QAHE and its university partners, it is important to engage with them in order to provide them with the specific information and encouragement that they need in order to apply.

In this context, good practice means the following:

- Providing targeted, personalised information according to the enquirer's specified requirements to deliver an excellent prospective student experience.
- Sending attractive and engaging emails to enquirers
- Inviting enquirers to relevant events and activities, e.g. open days, presentations, webinars, and recruitment fairs.



- Engagement with enquirers in a timely manner – all enquiries should be responded to within 3-5 working days.
- Utilisation of our core systems for engagement which includes:
 - Dotmailer for HTML based group marketing communications
 - Through personal email communications - Individual and university partner specific email addresses (where appropriate).
 - Connex for all direct telephone communications with enquirers and applicants.

13. Social Media

Our Marketing Team manages the social media accounts. There are different accounts for QAHE as follows:

QA Higher Education	Ulster University London & Birmingham	Northumbria University London
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linkedin• Instagram• YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facebook• Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facebook

The social media accounts are used to promote QAHE and its university partners as a desirable study options, as well as to connect with students and to provide them with relevant information about studying with us. The social media accounts are thus used for, inter alia:

- information on student life at QAHE and its university partners
- notifications of attendance at recruitment events
- application deadlines
- announcement of scholarships
- announcements of new programmes
- photos of QAHE staff, agents and partners

Social media interactions and usage is reported monthly by the Head of Marketing.

The ultimate focus of the social media sites is to drive enquirers and applications to QAHE and its University partner websites where prospective students can gain more information and register their interest in studying with us.

Additionally, our Marketing Team assist with responding to questions from prospective students received via these social media accounts.

14. Use of Education Representatives

QAHE works with education representatives globally as part of its student recruitment strategy. Representatives are managed by QAHE's regional recruitment teams.

QAHE has a dedicated Agent Compliance Manager who is responsible for ensuring that QAHE's recruitment teams and Representatives work within QAHE's Agent Compliance Framework and as such facilitates in:

- Conducting due diligence and assessments of all Representative Applications



- Monitoring
- Conducting Investigations
- Applying of necessary interventions

Good practice in this context means:

- Contracting of an appropriate number of representatives such that they can be effectively managed by the regional recruitment teams.
- Regularly visiting and training representatives.
- Ensuring QAHE holds accurate records and personal details of agents.
- Ensuring all contracts and due diligence are completed and approved in advance of working with the representative
- Regional recruitment teams having clear oversight of the marketing and recruitment activities that the representative is carrying out. As a minimum, QAHE's regional teams are expected to monitor and periodically audit the marketing activities of a representative.
- Terminating representative agreements based upon:
 - Poor student recruitment performance
 - Poor compliance (UKVI, marketing, etc)
 - Unethical or unprofessional behaviour

Representatives are encourage to feedback to QAHE at the end of each intake (three times per year in March, June and October) to ensure that QAHE is making continuous improvements in its use of Education Representatives. This is carried out via the NPI Buyer survey. Representatives are openly encourage to propose changes and improvements in this process.

Linked to this, QAHE has a “Use of Education Representatives Policy” for all staff working in Student Recruitment based roles. This references a number of documents which should be familiar to those involved, which currently include:

- Representative Recruitment Policy
- Representative Guide
- Representative Application Form
- Representative Referencing
- Representative Training & Monitoring Process
- Representative Training Checklist
- Representative KPI Review

15. Engaging with offer holders

Not all applicants who receive an offer from QAHE its University partners will go on to accept the offer and enrol. Offer holders will often be in receipt of offers from multiple institutions. It is therefore important to engage with offer holders in order to provide them with the information needed to make an informed decision about whether to accept the offer from QAHE and its university partners.

Good practice in this context means:

- provision of information highlighting the key benefits to the offer holder of studying at QAHE and its University Partners
- information on scholarships and funding;
- information about the career benefits of the courses we offer



- clear and transparent information on deadlines that the offer holder will need to meet.
- Engaging, professional and University Partner specific communications
- clear information on how to contact us including:
 - Direct staff contact details where possible
 - Direct email addresses
 - Access to social media and messaging platforms, such as WeChat and Whatsapp.
- Contact with offer holders at least once per week where the course start date is within six months.

All offer holders are required to accept their offers formally prior to enrolment on courses with QAHE and its university partners.

16. Scholarships, Bursaries, Fee Waivers and Discounts

QAHE and its University partners actively seek to recruit students. QAHE's regional recruitment teams are responsible for ensuring Scholarships, Bursaries, Fee Waives and Discounts are fit for purpose in the regions in which they work.

QAHE's regional recruitment teams are responsible for ensuring enquirers, applicants and representatives are correctly trained and informed.

QAHE specifically seeks to make higher education accessible to students at all times. Where the cost of study is a barrier to applicants, our recruitment staff are actively encouraged and empowered to remove these barriers by promoting the availability of Scholarships, Bursaries, Fee Waivers and Discounts.

Good practice in the provision of Scholarships, Bursaries, Fee Waivers and Discounts is:

- Working within agreed sign off levels and structures, with approvals in place and recorded on systems where appropriate.
- Ensuring that they are correctly applied at application stage, prior to offers being made.
- Directly encouraging:
 - Early application and enrolment
 - Full Fee payment
- Directly rewarding:
 - Academic attainment
 - English attainment
 - Other attainment as appropriate (for example outstanding CV's and industry experience)

17. Anti-Bribery

QA Ltd has an Anti Bribery Policy which covers all activities and duties completed by QA staff, including those in QAHE, and those working in Student Recruitment. This policy is updated from time to time, and is centrally stored with all other QA policies and accessible to all staff.

18. Embedding student recruitment good practice

QAHE provides various resources in order to help embed student recruitment good practice throughout the institution:



- Resourcebase for control and release of all marketing materials.
- Akeru for the management of all enquiries by students.
- MOSA for the management of all student applications and management of agent records.
- Connex for the compliant contact with applicants and agents by telephone.

19. Further guidelines, references, and resources for staff

British Council London Statement 2012:

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/london_statement.pdf

QAA Guidance about Providing Information to Prospective Undergraduate Students (Nov 2016)

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=3132#.WNUEbEZIAVI>

QAA Quality Code for Higher Education

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code>

UKCISA Code of Ethics

<https://institutions.ukcisa.org.uk/Info-for-universities-colleges--schools/Publications--research/resources/41/The-UKCISA/AISA-Code-of-Ethics>

UKCISA Code of Practice

https://institutions.ukcisa.org.uk/file_download.aspx?id=17150

HELOA, Training

www.heloa.ac.uk/training