1. **AIM & OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE**

1.1 **Aim**

To offer free and impartial information, advice and guidance on learning and employability to current, past and prospective students of all abilities, as well as the general public.

In cases where staff feel further specialist knowledge is required, prospective students will be referred to other suitable services or external agencies.

1.2 **Objectives**
   i. To make people aware of the Information, Advice and Guidance service offered using promotional materials, website, social media, presentations, advice events, enrolment events, induction and the Student Zone on Moodle
   ii. To respond promptly and accurately with impartial and appropriate Information, Advice and Guidance

iii. To offer an approachable and helpful Information, Advice and Guidance service seeking to be inclusive for all
iv. To develop effective partnerships with other providers and relevant agencies to enhance the service offered to the perspective student's by referring as appropriate
v. To ensure all staff regularly update their skills through a variety of training and development opportunities
vi. To use informal and formal feedback to evaluate, review and improve the service

1.3 Perspective Student Outcomes:
Potential and existing students feel supported and are clear about their next steps or have ideas to follow up
(The service is evaluated as part of the annual self-assessment review using various performance measures. Perspective student feedback as well as this evaluation informs the development process of the Service.)

2. SERVICES PROVIDED
We can offer help and information on the following issues:

• Additional Learning Support	• Gap year and voluntary work
• Applications to courses at the College	• Health and Well-being issues
• Careers guidance	• Higher Education (applications and financial help) including UCAS, Oxbridge and competitive entry
• Childcare whilst at College	
• Counselling services	
• Course Choices and progression opportunities	• International Enquiries and Applications
• Employability (Work experience, CV and job search)	• Job Fairs
	• Safeguarding
• Enrichment activities	• Signposting to external agencies
• Jobshop	• Student Feedback
	• Study Support
• Financial help (inc. Bursaries and loans)	• Transport

3. INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE INTERVIEWS
i. Staff provide a range of 'Drop In' and 'Appointment' based interviews.
Examples include:
   • Drop in visitors to the Course Advice Team, Admissions Team, Student Support Tutors, or The Agency
   • Appointments with Student Services staff / HE Study Support Tutor / Student Support Tutors / Careers Advisor
   • Assist prospective students, mainly in schools, in completing applications
   • Community displays and events
ii. The aim should be for a perspective student to have the opportunity to consider and explore options and receive appropriate support and encouragement
iii. Confidential rooms will be offered to perspective students if they request one or it is appropriate. Alternative appropriate rooms will be booked via the College room booking system

iv. To get the most from our IAG services it is best if perspective students can be as open and honest as possible in their discussions

v. Staff will provide impartial IAG at all times and where third party issues are relevant they will make this known

4. DELAYED/CANCELLED APPOINTMENTS

In case of illness or unforeseeable circumstances where a member of staff is unavailable to see a perspective student who has an appointment, the following action will be taken:

i. Another member of staff will cover the appointment if appropriate.

ii. If not, the perspective student will be contacted via Reception or Student Services Helpdesk at the earliest possible time to apologise and inform them of the cancellation. An alternative appointment should be offered at the earliest convenient opportunity.

5. COMMUNITY LOCATIONS

i. Information, Advice and Guidance Services may be delivered in outreach locations, including when attending events and shows across the county

ii. Where a service cannot be provided offsite or a perspective student would like a more confidential guidance interview, appointments on site will be offered.

6. HEALTH & SAFETY

i. Staff should ensure that College guidelines are followed (see Health & Safety Policy, Health & Safety Staff guide and Visiting Speakers Policy)

ii. Students are referred to the Safe Learner's Guide on Moodle and the Student Handbook

iii. Mobile phones are available to staff when working offsite

iv. There is a Safeguarding Team for students to contact if they have any concerns about their safety. Posters are displayed throughout the College.

7. REFERRALS / NETWORKING LINKS

i. Shrewsbury Colleges Group works with a variety of organisations to provide education opportunities, and it is expected that Information, Advice & Guidance Staff will undertake relevant networking with local and national referral points as part of their usual job

ii. Shrewsbury Colleges Group works on a principle of impartial IAG and within any referral to linked organisations we will endeavour to make clear our links and ensure that perspective students are provided with a full perspective of the opportunities open to them

iii. The point at which referral should be undertaken is where a member of staff feels that a prospective student would 'benefit' from the services or assistance of another agency, (or another department within the College). At this stage that member of staff should make this known to the prospective student. This may be verbally, though where deemed necessary may be recorded on the prospective student's ProMonitor record.

iv. Where there is a referral to a Third Party organisation, the prospective student should be made aware of the links between them and The College. The reason

for the referral should be made clear and where possible alternative options should be explained fully

   v.   Staff may also act in an advocacy role on a prospective student's behalf where requested or with the express permission of a prospective student

   vi.   Permission must be gained from a prospective student, verbally, before a member of staff contacts any other agencies on their behalf

   vii.   Staff need to consider the prospective student's needs and wishes concerning confidentiality and must also consider national legislation concerning data protection and equality and diversity

   viii.   A prospective student will have the right to request not to be referred if they so desire. Though they may be provided with the relevant information and encouraged to contact other agencies themselves

   ix.   Referral appointment should be made during the prospective student contact where possible and within 5 days if not

   x.   Under "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018" there are additional legislative duties for providers of education and training to improve the well-being of children/young people.

   xi.   Relevant College staff have received training to support this initiative.

8. PASSING OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND REFERRAL POINTS

Prospective students may wish staff to contact other agencies on their behalf and maintain confidentiality. This may be undertaken as appropriate and with both parties agreeing verbally to the action

Where a member of staff has concerns about the objectivity of a referral point, these concerns should be highlighted and explained to the prospective student

9. RECORDING INFORMATION

Information will be processed into statistical information which will guide good practice and strategic policy/action. Pro Monitor is used to record a brief summary of any 1:1 IAG sessions that take place.

9.1 School Liaison

School Liaison staff record enquiries received in schools, such as numbers seen and areas of interest. They also assist pupils in completing online applications to the College.

9.2 Welfare/Financial Applications

   i.   Applications for a variety of Welfare and Financial supports are serviced through Student Services, each requiring differing levels of information collection and support from staff. These records contain sensitive information and are kept securely

   ii.   Student Services staff provide assistance in completing applications and may act in an advocacy role as well as sitting on appropriate internal resource allocation panels

   iii.   Records based on applications may be processed for targeting and statistical purposes.

9.3 Higher Education and Careers

i. A variety of student references and applications for further study are collated and administered. Generally, the HE Student Support Tutor / Additional Learning Support Manager deals with outgoing materials and the appropriate storage of related records (paper copy and computer based)

ii. UCAS operate an Open Reference policy. However, the HE Student Support Tutor / Additional Learning Support Manager would refer the student to their tutor to read references if appropriate.

9.4 External Community Events
Records of numbers of visitors seen at external events are kept (e.g. at Community Shows and staff attending school' Careers Conventions). These are used for year on year statistics to confirm interest for courses offered. No confidential or sensitive information is involved.

9.5 Registration details of visitors to Advice Events
Name, address, postcode, phone number, how they found out about event, and area of interest details are taken at events and held on a database and used to evaluate attendance and subject interest levels. Further information may be sent to relevant visitors as appropriate.

9.6 Course Advice Team
i. Details (Name, address, postcode, phone number and course area) of courses enquiries are logged – except when the information required does not warrant logging e.g. time of course, name of tutor etc.

ii. Course Advice figures are used for monthly reports to Management to evaluate subject interest and enrolment levels and any courses not currently offered

iii. Further information may be sent to relevant enquiries as appropriate.

10. STORAGE OF RECORDS
i. Individual members of IAG staff have responsibility for their own records

ii. Records should be kept under secure (locked cabinets) conditions when not in use and it is recommended that each member of staff holds a secure file for records.

iii. In the case of outreach work, secure files should be kept with staff at all times and stored securely overnight. Files should not be left overnight in cars.

iv. Administrative staff collating records should be made aware of their responsibilities concerning confidentiality/security of record when records are in their charge.

v. Any computer based information is password protected. E.g. Course information and school liaison statistics information is stored electronically and is therefore password protected.

vi. Records are stored in line with the College's Data Protection policy

11. FORMATS OF INFORMATION
i. Information Advice and Guidance staff hold a range of information providing prospective students with support on various issues concerning learning and employability.

ii. ICT based resources such as "Unifrog" are used within the service. These are provided with 1:1 support or signposted to, along with our licence code

iii.   Use is made of web based information (e.g. UCAS). This is accessed by staff and students, with print out information being made available to prospective students. Prospective students do not have direct internet access unsupervised.

iv.   Key documents, including Statement of Service and the Information, Advice & Guidance Policy can be supplied by Reception in large print, braille and other languages on request. (Due to the nature of the local ethnic population it is not felt necessary to provide promotional material in a range of languages. However, where the information is requested every effort will be made to satisfy the prospective students and the College will aim to provide this information within 3 working days).

v.   Students are directed to the Student Zone on Moodle at Induction and at Tutorials throughout the year.

vi.   Course factsheets are available either as hard copy or electronically via email or the College websites

vii.   The College websites along with Facebook and Twitter provide information on college services

viii.   The College has contacts with the Sensory Inclusion Service for supplying documents in different formats

ix.   Information Advice and Guidance Staff also work closely with members of the Learning Resource Centre where the main library and careers library are based.

12.   UPDATING INFORMATION

i.   Information produced internally is dated and updated or replaced annually

ii.   Any external information on display is monitored by appropriate individual staff to ensure it is current.

iii.   Certain documents/publications within the IAG units are produced on an annual basis, such as prospectuses.

iv.   Policies relevant to students are available on Moodle and updated annually

v.   Staff are responsible for updating their own specialist areas of information, reviewing purchases and expiry dates of information. This would take place at one to ones, team meetings or at performance reviews. Staff need to make themselves aware of budget constraints and alternative funding sources from external organisations to help best action this work.

vi.   It is expected that through networking and personal updating staff will review information and resources used within the unit.

13.   STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

i.   Shrewsbury Colleges Group acknowledges that its employees are its most valuable resource, and it is therefore committed to investment in their training and development (T&D). The purpose of this investment is to give all staff the opportunity to develop their skills in order to improve the quality of the performance of the College and to enhance their own careers

ii.   The aims of the College's T&D approaches are to enable staff to:

- Acquire the knowledge and skills to enable them to perform effectively in their current roles
- Respond effectively to the demands placed upon them by internal and external change and development

- Continuously improve the quality of the College
iii. One to One or Team Meetings are held with staff on a termly basis as a minimum
iv. Performance reviews take place annually.

14. PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS FEEDBACK

14.1 The purpose of the feedback is to provide the service with:

- Statistical information and personal comments on the experiences of prospective students and other agencies using the service.
  - The information gained is used to enhance best practice and target services to benefit prospective students most effectively.

14.2 **Methods of gaining feedback:**
We invite and encourage feedback from all prospective students, either verbally or via completion of prospective student feedback forms. These can be anonymous.
  i. Feedback forms – given out to prospective student directly and at various internal events throughout the year or sent via email or post following an event or other contact
  ii. Verbal feedback from staff, including internal emails and comments
  iii. External letters and emails are responded to if necessary and kept on file
  iv. 121 and Team meetings – Feedback is an agenda item
  v. Surveys to students are completed twice a year (November and May). These include questions on all IAG services.
  vi. Student focus groups meet throughout the year within curriculum areas
  vii. HE Student consultations held termly
  viii. Annual Review meetings occur with our 8 partner schools
  ix. Questionnaires are given out (to Shropshire Youth staff and pupils) for feedback on prospectus design and content and the presentations at schools
  x. A College Update Event held annually provides an opportunity for representatives from The Shropshire Youth Service and local schools to give feedback to Student Services staff as well as curriculum staff on the College's services

14.3 Feedback is collated providing annual feedback to continuously review and improve the IAG service within the teams. This is used to inform the Self-Assessment Reviews for each team.

14.4 **Compliments & Complaints Procedure**
  i. The College has a standard form for any student who has a complaint or grievance
  ii. Any positive comments, made either verbally or via surveys/response forms, are fed back to the relevant member of staff
  iii. Group Vice Principal for Quality and Curriculum Management records and coordinates any complaints and compliments and the Quality committee oversees the annual report for complaints and compliments

15. RESOURCING

Purchases are made out of the relevant unit budgets and resource requirements are reviewed at annual budget forecast meetings and reviewed throughout the year

Free literature is accessed where possible, e.g. Government information and University leaflets

16. REVIEW & EVALUATION

There is a three yearly review (or earlier where legislation or change of policy dictates) of Information, Advice & Guidance policies and procedures.

GVP Curriculum Support & Business Development | Information, Advice and Guidance | Created: 19/01/2017 Reviewed: 30/01/2019