

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Policy

Policy Statement

OMG Education (OMG) aims to provide high-quality information, advice, and guidance services. This will enable learners, volunteers, and other stakeholders to make informed choices about ways in which they can meet their training and development needs to reach their full potential.

OMG's Key Strategic Targets for IAG Services:

OMG has identified seven key strategic targets for the delivery of a comprehensive IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) service. These are to:

Objective One:

Provide accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance that meets the needs of existing and potential learners, volunteers and other stakeholders about the courses, qualifications and additional services we or other providers offer. To benefit from the service is not dependent upon enrolment to or future attendance of any of's provisions or services.

Objective Two:

Provide accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance that meet the needs of employees regarding their rights, entitlements and responsibilities as employees, staff development opportunities, performance management and grievance procedures.

Objective Three:

To achieve an integrated IAG service to ensure a joined-up approach to the provision, making sure that any user can be confident they will benefit from internal and external referral and signposting.

Objective Four:

Provide a service that conforms to the standards laid down by the National Information, Advice and Guidance Board and which also meets the standards required for quality marks.

Objective Five:

OMG will conduct the service with professionally qualified and experienced practitioners. It is identified as essential that service users understand and can interpret the Information, Advice and Guidance conveyed to them. Additional assistance will be available to meet this commitment.

Objective Six:

Provide a service which is trusted, confidential (subject to OMG's confidentiality policy) and which meets the highest standards of equality of opportunity. In accordance with OMG's Equality and Diversity Policy, there is a commitment to providing equality of opportunity by ensuring that advice and guidance services are available to all regardless of age, disability, gender or gender identity, race (ethnic origin), religious belief or sexual orientation.

Objective Seven:

Raise the quality and effectiveness of OMG's IAG services; this is to be achieved by the continuous monitoring of the service, seeking feedback and opinions from the users of the service and using this to plan any improvements or necessary changes to the service.

Supporting these objectives are the following statements:

- IAG – statement of external service
- IAG – statement of internal service

Statement of External Service

This statement sets out the details of OMG's IAG service as it applies to external clients, Learners and other stakeholders. The purpose of this statement is to clarify what is on offer and what someone can expect when using the service.

Who can use our services?

- **Current Learners** who are enrolled on a course at OMG projects can access the service and can request an enhanced/follow-up IAG interview.
- **Enquirers and prospective learners** who do not yet study with OMG but are considering us as an option.

What can you expect from us?

- **Accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance** on the full range of services we offer, as detailed below. We offer information and advice on courses and qualifications available at OMG and other external providers. If studying elsewhere is more appropriate, then we will suggest alternatives to ensure the client's best interests are considered.
- **A service that conforms to national standards.** We aim to meet the Principles for Coherent Service Delivery laid down by The National Information, Advice and Guidance Board. This means that our service will be:
 - Accessible and Visible
 - Professional and Knowledgeable
 - Impartial
 - Responsive to individual need
 - Friendly and welcoming
- **Equality of Treatment.** We aim to treat all our students solely based on their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race (ethnicity), religious beliefs, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, or any other distinction.
- **Confidentiality.** To provide the best possible service, we need to ask questions about your personal details and circumstances. This information will be kept confidential. (Subject to OMG's confidentiality policy and Data protection policy) Individual records of clients can only be accessed by authorised OMG employees who need to see this information as part of their work. We take all appropriate physical, technical and contractual measures to ensure that your information will not be used by anyone outside OMG. Should OMG need to pass your data to a third-party organisation, this will only be done with your full consent.

What do we expect from you?

- As much relevant and honest information as you can give us so that we can answer your enquiry fully, e.g., disclosing a disability or an additional requirement to enable us to provide extra support if applicable.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your application, your enquiry, your course, or your progress, we expect you to contact us as soon as possible to resolve the issue.

Feedback, comments, and complaints

- We are committed to developing the quality of our services, and we regularly seek the views of our students to find out how far they are satisfied with the courses and support provided by OMG.
- We welcome any comments you may have which could help us to improve our services. If you are a learner with us, you can pass your comments directly to your tutor or your elected learning representative. If you are not yet a learner, you can contact us by emailing jamal.miah@omgeducation.co.uk, including 'IAG Request' in the email subject.
- We hope that you are happy with the service you receive, but if you are not, then we will investigate and deal with any difficulties you experience. If you have a complaint, then we will treat it in confidence and will do our best to resolve it fairly and quickly under OMG's complaints procedure, a copy of which can be obtained from our website.

The Services we Offer

Help with choosing the right course of study and/or qualification.

- Printed information will be available detailing OMG's provision and services. This information is also available on the website. It also includes details about learning at OMG and the additional integrated services available to learners. This information is comprehensive and regularly updated.
- Access to OMG's expert IAG team, who can provide you with more information about the study and employability options open to you.
- For courses, a personal interview with a member of our frontline staff, who will discuss your educational background and needs, your career aspirations, and the options open to you.
- Course information, information, advice, and guidance are also available through affiliated centres, outreach events, open days, and various local shows and events throughout the year.

Help with starting your studies.

- We will provide you with written information about the enrolment process, transport arrangements for enrolment, and attendance.
- We will provide you with an induction programme which will include information about:
 - Your specific course and how it will be assessed

- Learning support available to you
- The IAG team
- Welfare and Counselling services available to you

Support during your programme

- We will provide ongoing advice and guidance throughout your time with us to assist your learning and your personal development. This will include:
 - Course-based support from your tutor or employment services broker.
 - A three-stage Information, advice, and guidance service to enable you to plan your personal, educational and career development. Every Learner at OMG will receive an initial, mid-point and Exit IAG interaction.
 - Reasonable adjustment and study support to facilitate your studies if you have a disability or additional requirements.

Help with Moving on

- We will provide help and support to enable you to choose what you will do next. This may include:
 - Support from teaching staff who can provide you with more information about options beyond your present study, whether it's progression to another course of study, progression to further/Higher education or progression to employment
 - Information, advice and guidance about the job-seeking process, including CVs and completing application forms, preparing for interviews, and looking for job vacancies.

NB. Access to the enhanced level service is subject to funding eligibility.

Statement of Internal Service

This statement sets out the details of OMG's IAG service as it applies to employees, volunteers and additional stakeholders. The purpose of this statement is to clarify the aims of the internal service, what can be provided, and what someone can expect when using the internal IAG service.

Who can use our services?

- **Current employees and volunteers** who are employed by OMG on either a full-time, part-time or sessional contract and are seeking advice & guidance.

What can you expect from us?

- **Accurate and impartial information, advice and guidance** on the full range of services and opportunities that the organisation offers. This could be for reasons of staff development, career advancement, gaining additional experience, and assistance preparing for a change of career direction.

How to access this service?

- All staff can and already accesses the service in several ways, directly through induction, a 1-2-1 or an employee appraisal. Direct access to an IAG practitioner can be arranged if required by contacting one of the advisors via a centre.
- A service that conforms to national standards. We aim to meet the Principles for Coherent Service Delivery laid down by The National Information, Advice and Guidance Board. This means that our internal service will be of the same standard and quality as outlined above for the external service.

Internal Service Objectives:

1. IAG provision is at the heart of our external providers, and so it is too for the internal provision. The main function of the internal IAG provision is for internal communication and as a tool for the continued development of the organisation's performance and individual employees.
2. To enable our employees to identify and recognise the extent of their competencies and to direct them to the most appropriate internal and/or external sources for personal and professional development. This will include addressing individual CPD (Continuous Professional Development) needs.
3. OMG has committed to training and equipping all frontline employees in IAG to a level that meets their job role requirements and responsibilities. This will ensure all employees have a sufficient knowledgeable and professional approach to their work and the ability to continuously develop the professional development of the organisation and its clients and stakeholders.
4. To evaluate and continuously improve our performance, measure distance travelled against:
 - National Quality Marks (Investors in People, etc.)
 - Staff Retention and turnover statistics
 - Requests for additional training.
 - Staff Continuous Personal Development (meeting Institute for Learning, Awarding Body and other related requirements).
 - 1-2-1s, Appraisals and Performance Management meetings
5. To continue to develop effective strategies and take effective action to improve the company's performance through the up-skilling and development of our employees and volunteers.
6. To use the Internal IAG Policy to ensure the continued reinforcement of OMG's values and operating practices.

OMG Performance Management Guidance for Line Managers and Team Leaders

OMG has developed a system for team leaders and managers to evidence the use of the internal IAG service with their employees. Each team leader or manager has been issued a Performance Management file to keep track of employees' 1-2-1s and appraisals.

HR has written procedural guidance for team leaders and managers, which should be referred to implement the Internal IAG service. Listed below is a summary of the areas covered within the procedure.

Guidance Objectives:

- What is Performance Management?
- Benefits of Performance Management

Main features of the process

- Preparing a Performance Plan (Inc. Use of Smart Objectives)
- Competencies
- The Development Plan (inc prep of Development Opportunities)
- An Action Plan
- The Performance Review

OMG Employees

OMG has developed a new system for all employees to record the use of the internal IAG service. The CPD file will allow every employee to keep copies of their CV, applicable qualification certificates, 1-2-1s, annual appraisals and completed CPD together in one place. This file will allow all employees to track their role-related performance targets, personal and professional development targets and CPD activities.

Appendix 1

The 3 stages of the IAG Process

Initial IAG

- A discussion and the recording of the client's current circumstances.
- A current skills/qualifications audit.
- A discussion and the recording of the options that are available to the client, both internally and externally.
- An exploration of the eligibility and any possible barriers to entry of the options was discussed with the client.
- An explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen course of action decided upon by the client.
- An explanation of the purpose and function of the initial assessment and or skills scan and how the outcomes are used to support and develop the ILP.
- The creation of a personalised ILP (individual learning plan)
- An explanation of the additional support that is available.
- Giving contact details to the client of the practitioner and the centre if applicable.

Mid-stage IAG

- A discussion about the client's progress against their learning and assessment targets.
- A review of the appropriateness of the client's ILP and a discussion to decide whether changes are required.
- A review of whether the client requires additional services as part of their learner's journey; this may include referral/signposting to additional internal or external services.
- A discussion about the client's post-programme opportunities will include a review of the client's employability and eligibility for continued learning.

Exit stage IAG

- Benefits gained from participating in the programme/course of learning.
- A discussion to review the client's next steps in their learner's journey will include future opportunities, what is available and funding opportunities.
- Collection of feedback from the client on their reflection on the learning experience and the level of service they received.
- In a discussion of possible career progression, if the client is employed, the employer ideally should be encouraged to participate in exit IAG.

Appendix 2

How to ensure we provide an effective IAG Session

This is a guide which is to be considered as the Minimum Level of Standard that any OMG IAG Practitioner will deliver to any beneficiary. (NB. This is not an exhaustive list but is to be considered as a guide of practice).

- Make sure that you introduce yourself.
- Manage the environment? Complete the Housekeeping, toilets/fire exit, and H&S procedures, and consider if a private space is required. Is there a gender situation that necessitates a semi-private space to protect the client and practitioner?
- Explain the Confidentiality Policy and its Limits. Also, mention how Data Protection legislation fits and OMG's policy applies to IAGs.
- There are exceptions to confidentiality; explain these are in the interest of the client or the client's family, and confidentiality is only breached in exceptional circumstances if there is a possibility of a risk of immediate harm.
- Explain the session plan; give details of timing and the expectation of the session 30, 45 or 60 mins etc. When would I need to use a private room?
- Gathering of information (what they need and where they are)
 - Personal and contact details
 - Current situation
 - Aims and aspirations
- Identify realistic requirements according to their skills and challenge those that are unrealistic.
- Ensure that we provide client support: use relevant information leaflets, and when signposting, make sure the details are up to date and accurate.
- If you don't know an answer, be honest and state when you can get that information to the client. (Decide to investigate and research it)
- Action plan
 - Discuss suitable options and barriers to entry, and these can be removed
 - Use smart targets and prioritise the client's course of action.
 - Make sure the client understands and agrees with the plan.
- Summarise the conversation:
 - Record the session and provide a copy to the client.
 - Double Check client's satisfaction and understanding of the session and the information given.

How is an effective session completed?

1. Effective questioning/basic skills

Questioning skills – the ability to ask appropriate questions that encourage the client to tell their story. These include:

- Use open questions that do not allow a yes / any answer.
- Only use closed questions when appropriate.
- Use probing / exploratory questions to gain a greater understanding of the client's needs.
- Only use challenging questions when appropriate.

2. What's going on: - Clarification of the key issues

- Help clients tell their stories: Clients need to talk about their problems and concerns. This may be done with ease or something which a client struggles to discuss.
- Help clients challenge their blind spots and develop new perspectives: Clients are enabled to see their concerns objectively. Problems and missed opportunities are discussed, as well as ways in which they want their life to be different.
- Help clients focus on issues that will make a difference: Clients are helped to identify their most important concerns and prioritise.

3. How do we help the client to get what they need?

- Help clients brainstorm a range of activities to accomplish their goals: Clients will need a range of options to help them decide and consider a number of possible solutions to allow a client to achieve their goals.
- Help clients choose action strategies that best fit their needs and resources: The client is helped to pick the best solution from the ones brainstormed.
- Help the client draw up a plan: A step-by-step process is discussed for achieving goals, with goals prioritised.

4. Skills required:

- Paraphrasing: putting into words briefly what the speaker has said without interpreting or adding anything.
- Summarising: drawing the main points from the information the speaker has said
- Empathy: being able to hear beyond the words that have been spoken, note the tone of voice, and the emphasis of certain words that may be expressing the unspoken feeling.