

## Communication For Staff & Students

### 1. Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline how we communicate information to both our students and staff in an effective and appropriate way.

### 2. Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values by keeping students, staff and the community well informed. This reinforces the important role that students, staff play in supporting Shockout's ethos.
- 2.2 We have various strategies for communicating with students and staff. Some of our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement; while others reflect what we believe is important for our institution.
- 2.3 We make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural and other groups represented in our institution as outlined in our Equal Opportunities Policy.

### 3. Range of Communication Methods

Existing methods of communication include: -

- Noticeboard
- Tutorials
- Emails
- Telephone
- Induction Week
- Student Handbook
- Staff Handbook
- Surveys/Questionnaires
- Shockout Website
- Student Representatives
- SSL Meetings
- Word of Mouth
- Classrooms
- Student Support

- Moodle
- Microsoft Teams
- Zoom

#### 4. Marketing Courses

4.1 Information regarding all the courses that we offer are on our website.

4.3 Shockout's social media pages post information on a regular basis on audition dates and course information.

#### 5. Programme Handbook

Provides useful information and guidance to students.

#### 6. Internal Communication

6.1 Students will be informed as early as is possible of any changes to any timetables by email or student data management system.

6.2 Staff are provided with a yearly plan for all meetings at the beginning of Academic Year and will be sent diary request in their calendar.

6.3 Any changes to meetings staff will be informed as early as possible via email.

6.4 Relevant training is provided to both students and staff alike regarding Health & Safety.

6.5 Ad hoc meetings will be arranged for staff and students as and when necessary.

#### 7. Electronic Communication

7.1 Staff and Students are to ensure that their passwords are kept in strict confidence.

7.2 Staff and Students to ensure they adhere to our Data Protection Policy.

7.3 Staff should be aware of the disadvantages that social media can incur with regards to security.

7.4 Staff should not have current students on social media as friends/contacts.

7.5 Updated online training courses are provided for staff and students before the start of each academic year ensuring that relevant information is accessible.

#### 8. Tone of Voice

Shockout 'Tone of Voice' is the psychological effect we want to convey within all of our communications, so that we can engage everyone in the spirit of the Shockout identity statement and foster a positive working environment.

8.1 **Our tone to be embedded in all of our communications:**

- Staff should speak and write positively, honestly, with clarity.
- Communications are professional and well informed, a two-way street where we engage and listen.
- We speak and write diplomatically yet with confidence, focusing on the function of our communication.
- We communicate with understanding, taking the heat out of situations of disagreement by depersonalising our conversations.

## 8.2 Behaviours to consider

Remember: communications can be with colleagues throughout the Shockout, partners, students or any other stakeholder. This Tone of Voice policy should inform all communications.

- As a default position, all of our communications will be supportive of team members.
- Cultural awareness is at the heart of what we do. We need to make sure we are aware of cultural and personal differences in communication.
- Communication should be through official business channels e.g., email, student/staff portals etc. Don't assume you can contact through individuals' personal channels.
- Think before you reply to an email and think twice before you "Reply to All."
- If you are cc'ing others into an email, say why, particularly if it is an initially private communication.
- Consider the need for cc or Bcc'ing others, is it necessary? Unwanted or unnecessary emails can impact upon workloads and intrude upon individuals' time and work/life balance.
- Respond to emails as soon as possible – if you cannot give the information/answer requested immediately, acknowledge the email and explain the delay.
- Consider the volume of email/communication you may send; can these be condensed into a single email?
- Block capitals and excessive punctuation in an email can be perceived as aggressive.
- Contextualise communications – state what the purpose of the email/conversation is at the outset.
- Use content fields in meeting requests and the Outlook Calendar to contextualise meetings.
- State purpose of email at outset and in the subject title.
- Put energy into considering your response. Don't react – respond, and always take a step back to take the heat out of difficult situations.

## 9. Communication Style

All communication with staff and students needs to be written in a formal manner whilst following guidelines surrounding response timescales.

### Related Policies

Equal Opportunities

Data Protection

Staff Handbook

Student Handbook

Tone of Voice