

## WORKING WITH OTHERS IN RECRUITMENT

### Purpose and scope

- 1.1. This section of the Consolidated Academic Policies and Regulations (CAPR) explains how the College works with others to recruit students, and how it safeguards the information disclosed by students who are recruited through these arrangements.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all staff and parties to student recruitment within and outside the College, and all students recruited on or after 1 October 2017 regardless of the date the initial contact with the student was made.
- 1.3. This policy does not apply to the use of current students in recruitment. However, the principles in this policy apply to it as far as is practical.

### Definitions

- 1.4. 'Educational agent' means a third party that the College contracts to fulfil certain agreed functions, normally regarding the marketing of its programmes or the recruitment of prospective students.

### Introduction

#### Overview

- 1.5. In appropriate circumstances, the College may use agents to market its programmes to prospective students at home and abroad. This enables the College to reach all students who may benefit from its programmes and to grow the academic community in ways that benefit our staff, our students and their communities.
- 1.6. In contracting with such agents and representatives, the College recognises that the use and activities of agents and representatives must be compatible with effectively fulfilling its responsibilities for:
  - a) the academic standards of awards made in its name;
  - b) the academic quality of all programmes it teaches; and

ensuring its validating bodies have clear oversight of awards taught by the College.

### *Principles*

- 1.7. The College will appoint only high-calibre educational agents that it judges can provide a vital link between the College and our prospective students in the UK and around the world.
- 1.8. To appoint an educational agent, the College requires that the prospective agent:
  - a) has a record of recruiting students to the UK or could provide a link between the College and our prospective students in the UK and around the world;
  - b) has a knowledge and understanding of Higher Education in the UK (and in particular England); and
  - c) understands the College's values and has familiarised themselves with the programmes the College offers, its entry requirements and the benefits.

NOTE: It is also desirable that a prospective international agent has successfully completed the 'Agents and Representatives Training Workshop' of the British Council where this is appropriate and available.

- 1.9. Arrangements that the College negotiates with educational agents will be compatible with effectively fulfilling its responsibilities for the academic standards and quality of its awards and programmes. The College requires that these arrangements are set out in a legally binding agreement normally valid for up to three (3) years for international and up to two (2) years for domestic educational agents.
- 1.10. The College will monitor the educational agent's conduct and, if it thinks the contract has been breached, it will require remedial action. If the breaches are serious, the College will terminate the contract.
- 1.11. The College will send regular updates about programmes, events, the academic calendar and the admissions process to all agents. It will ensure that regular

forums are available for all agents to encourage their continuing professional development.

## Procedures

### *Overview*

1.12. There are three (3) stages in the selection and use of education agents:

*Stage 1 – Application and selection process.*

*Stage 2 – Negotiating of arrangements with prospective agents and representatives.*

*Stage 3 – Arrangements for monitoring and review.*

### *Stage 1 – Application and selection process*

1.13. Once an agent has been identified, the College will request that the agent visits the College website and familiarises themselves with the programmes and courses on offer. The agent must ensure they understand the values of the College, as well as the programme portfolio, policies and guidelines. This understanding of the College will be assessed by the Senior Officer responsible.

1.14. To begin the process of application, the College will provide all prospective agents with:

- a) a copy of the general educational agents terms and conditions;
- b) a copy of this policy ('Working with others in recruitment');
- c) a full undergraduate and postgraduate prospectus;
- d) a copy of the relevant offer packs (including template offer letters, a student contract, and an overview of student regulations).

1.15. To begin the process, the agent must send the College a completed application form, which includes the following information:

- a) Contact details of two (2) referees from reputable third parties.
- b) List of all licensed representative details, where appropriate.
- c) Student recruitment training completed.
- d) Proposed areas of education covered.
- e) Other services offered to potential students or the wider public.

- f) Details of key staff employed and any office locations.
- g) Geographic locations covered.
- h) Other partner institutions worldwide.
- i) Numbers of students sent to institutions in the UK in the previous academic year.

1.16. An application must normally be submitted at least three (3) months before the first student intake they propose to recruit for.

*Stage 2 – Negotiation of arrangements with prospective agents and representatives*

1.17. Once an application form is submitted, our recruitment staff – usually those with responsibility for the relevant territory – are responsible for negotiating arrangements with prospective agents and representatives. The negotiations will cover:

1.17.1. the content of the Educational Agent Contract, which includes the:

- a) obligations of the agent;
- b) restrictions upon their conduct;
- c) obligations of the College;
- d) commercial arrangements including setting annual targets or forecasts for recruitment and an annual marketing plan for advertising and promotion;
- e) financial arrangements including the rate of payment, the basis of payment, the currency of payment, and any promotional budget;
- f) procedures for terminating the agreement;
- g) dispute resolution; and
- h) matters of legal jurisdiction,

1.17.2. completion and review of the Educational Agent Questionnaire; and

1.17.3. collection of references.

1.18. The College will usually visit the agent before a contract is confirmed. This will enable the College to form an opinion about the agent's location, facilities, staffing and other attributes.

- 1.19. Once the application and negotiation process has been completed, the Senior Officer responsible should submit a report (including the finalised Education Agent Contract) to the Chair of the Education Committee.
- 1.20. The committee (through delegation to the Chair) must consider the report in the light of the requirements. It must decide whether or not to proceed with the appointment and approve the signing of the contract by the Senior Officer responsible. If agreed, the contract should be signed by the Senior Officer on behalf of the College and by the agent.
- 1.21. When the contract has been concluded, the College will enter the appropriate details on the Register of Approved Agents and Representatives. The information held on the register must include:
- a) name and address of the agent or representative;
  - b) contract start and end date;
  - c) documents held on file about the agent;
  - d) the relationship manager for the agent; and
  - e) current risk profile or ranking of the agent.

*Stage 3 – Arrangements for monitoring and review*

- 1.22. The College will monitor the agent's activities. Regularly during the contract, the relationship manager will talk to the agent, assess whether the agent is fulfilling the contract and report back to the Senior Officer responsible.
- 1.23. If the Senior Officer thinks the contract has been breached, they will notify the agent and require remedy within fourteen (14) days. If a remedy is not forthcoming, the Senior Officer may terminate the agreement, after which the agent's name will be removed from the register.
- 1.24. Once students enrol at the College, they will complete a feedback sheet on their recruitment and admission experiences that will be analysed by the College. The agent is responsible for ensuring students are aware of this feedback requirement and getting a reasonable level of feedback.

- 1.25. There should be frequent and regular ongoing communication between the College and the agent. If there are any concerns, the relationship manager must report them to the responsible officer. This officer will then review and, depending on the nature of the concern, take action as follows:
- a) Serious or multiple breaches of contract will be referred to the Senior Officer responsible. A review of the evidence will be conducted and completed within five (5) working days. If the alleged breaches are found to exist, the agent's contract will be terminated immediately.
  - b) If the Senior Officer regards the breaches as minor, they will be recorded in the register of agents and more training and instruction given. In addition, the Senior Officer may issue a formal warning if appropriate.

1.26. Specifically, the College will consider terminating an agent's contract at any time if:

- a) the students' feedback marks the agent's service as poor;
- b) the agent is found to be inaccurate or misleading in their discussion of College programme information or admissions details;
- c) the non-continuation or non-completion rate of students supplied by the agent is too high and causes concern as regards their academic progression;
- d) the enrolment or non-completion rate causes concern as regards breaching the maximum levels permitted by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI);
- e) the visa refusal rate is too high and causes concern as regards breaching the maximum levels permitted by UKVI.

1.27. The College reserves the right to terminate the contract if the agent breaches it or engages in conduct that is harmful to the College or to the reputation of UK Higher Education. Other similar criteria will be outlined in the contract.

1.28. The College will produce an annual monitoring report of each agent by the relationship manager. The report will cover at least the following:

1.28.1. Annual statistical data for each agent, including where appropriate an equality measure on gender, religion and sexuality:

- a) application-to-offer rates; offer-to-deposit rates; deposit-to-CAS rates; CAS-to-visa rates; visa-to-enrolment rates; date of enrolment;

- b) visa refusals (where applicable);
- c) progression and retention of students; and
- d) student attendance or compliance with immigration contact points.

1.28.2. Review of marketing including where appropriate 'mystery student' experiences of the relationship manager.

1.28.3. Review of student satisfaction with the recruitment and admissions process.

1.29. At the end of the contract, it will be subject to review. The review will seek to establish:

- a) whether or not the agent has successfully provided a link between GSM and appropriate prospective students;
- b) whether or not the agent will be able to fulfil their future obligations and abide by the restrictions.

1.30. The review will be conducted by the relevant Senior Officer (or nominee), who should consult the various bodies and people identified during the initial appointment process.

1.31. The Senior Officer should prepare a report for the Education Committee, which will then decide whether or not the contract should be renewed and the agent's name allowed to remain on the register.

#### Legal and regulatory context

1.32. This policy has been informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B2 & Part C). The Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK Higher Education institutions. It sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities is assured and improved.

1.33. The College may not be bound by the principles and this policy alone may not provide the procedure to meet all of these principles, some of which may be met

by other College policies and procedures. It uses the principles as guidance only, to help it deal soundly with these matters.

### Advice

1.34. Advice for students on the use and work of educational agents, and the associated lower-level College rules is available from the Student Recruitment Team (recruitment@gsmlondon.ac.uk). More complex queries may be referred to appropriate individuals or the Office of Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulation (oscar@gsmlondon.ac.uk)

1.35. Advice for staff on the use and work of educational agents is available from their nominated Academic Policy Partner or Head of Department.

1.36. If any staff development needs are identified, these may be discussed with members of the Staff and Educational Development Team.

### Fees

1.37. A fee may be charged for implementing and monitoring an educational agent arrangement as set out in the College's list of charges.

1.38. The College is not liable for financial or other consequences arising from action under this policy.

### Enforcement, monitoring and review

1.39. If any person or body in the College refuses to comply with a request or decision made to enforce these regulations, their refusal must be reported to the Academic Registrar, who will take such action to enforce this policy as they think necessary.

1.40. Each year, the College must receive a report that enables it to monitor, identify and act on any shortfalls in how these regulations are interpreted and applied. The annual report must include statistical data on the number of applications per agent; the outcomes, Departments and programmes from which they originate;

the length of the process; and the equality characteristics (including sex, disability and ethnicity) of those who apply, and separately those that are successful.

- 1.41. Every three (3) years, the College must review these regulations to ensure that:
- a) they remain up to date and continue to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code, applicable legislation or guidance;
  - b) areas of improvement, or any concerns, raised by students, external examiners, or professional bodies have been addressed; and
  - c) opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy have been taken.

**Schedule (not part of the policies and regulations):**

*Responsible Officer: Academic Registrar and College Secretary*

*Approved by: Board of Directors and Academic Board*

*Version: 1.0*

*Date: 1 June 2017*

*Monitoring and Review Body: Faculty Board*

*Effective From: 1 June 2017*

*Next Scheduled Review: June 2019*