

<b>Document Title</b>	Information Management and IT Infrastructure Policy
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<b>Document Owner</b>	Managing Director
<b>Approved by</b>	Board of Directors

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<b>Related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and local protocols</b>	<p>This policy has been designed with due regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012</li> <li>- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), et. al (2015), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)</li> <li>- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</li> <li>- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes (2023), QQI</li> </ul>
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## 1. PURPOSE

Information management encompasses all systems, processes, and technologies within SQT for the creation, use, and storage of relevant information. This policy outlines SQT's commitment to maintaining secure, robust, and scalable systems that support accurate reporting and timely decision-making across all areas of the organisation. This policy extends to include the management and protection of digital learning data via platforms such as Zoom, MS Teams, and Moodle. SQT is committed to ensuring that all information, whether gathered in physical or virtual environments, is processed securely, in compliance with GDPR, and supports the effective delivery and continuous improvement of its educational services.

## 2. SCOPE/APPLICATION

This policy applies to all records and documents created, received or maintained by staff in the course of carrying out their roles and responsibilities within SQT. This includes information generated through on-site, blended and fully online learning environments, using platforms such as Zoom, MS Teams, and Moodle. The policy covers all forms of information—whether in paper or digital format—ensuring secure handling, storage, and processing in compliance with data protection regulations, to support accurate reporting, decision-making, and educational service delivery.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITY

The following personnel are responsible for data management and IT infrastructure within SQT:

- The Managing Director has overall responsibility for data management and IT infrastructure within SQT and for ensuring that all staff are aware of data security measures when using SQT's systems.
- Course Administration Managers and the Accreditation Manager are responsible for creating, updating and maintaining the learner and programme records.
- The Accounts Manager is responsible for maintaining all financial records.
- The MIS system is supported and maintained/backed up by the external host provider.
- The Operations Project Manager is responsible for the upkeep, security, configuration, and reliable operation of the MIS.
- The Accreditation Manager is responsible for the set-up of learners and the administration of assessment activity on Moodle.
- The Accreditation Manager is responsible for transferring information to third party awarding bodies and preparing reports for various meetings with oversight from the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs.

## 4. POLICY

SQT is committed to the responsible collection, management, and analysis of data to support informed decision-making across all areas of the organisation, including on-site, blended, and fully online environments.

The following principles underpin this policy:

- SQT's data, information, and records management processes reflect best practice standards and comply with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, ensuring consistency across onsite, blended and online modalities.
- SQT's approach to data and information access is one of openness and transparency, ensuring that information is accessible and appropriately shared while maintaining compliance with data protection laws, regardless of the delivery method.
- SQT is committed to the responsible collection, retention and handling of personal and sensitive data ensuring that data collected through platforms such as Zoom, MS Teams, and Moodle is managed in accordance with GDPR and other relevant regulations.
- SQT demonstrates a commitment to maintaining a robust information security environment, applying stringent security measures to protect data
- Roles and responsibilities in respect of information and data management are clearly defined, ensuring that all staff understand their obligations for managing information securely and appropriately across all training formats.

## 5. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

This section outlines the various IT services, systems and platforms in place to ensure a secure and robust infrastructure is in place to support the current and future requirements of the organisation.

### 5.1 IT Service Management

SQT's IT infrastructure is managed by a well-established and reputable external IT service provider, ensuring a robust and secure environment for its operations. This partnership guarantees that expert resources are available to promptly resolve any technical issues that may arise, minimising downtime and ensuring smooth business continuity. The external IT company provides a comprehensive range of services to maintain the performance, security, and reliability of the IT infrastructure:

- **24/7 Monitoring and Alerting:** Advanced reporting tools continuously monitor both virtual and physical hardware, operating systems, applications, and specific processes across the network. This real-time, 24/7 monitoring provides complete visibility of the IT environment, ensuring that any potential issues are identified and addressed before they impact operations.
- **Preventative Maintenance:** Scheduled checks of the entire IT environment are conducted to assess system performance and ensure all components are operating optimally. Adjustments

are made proactively to prevent issues from escalating, helping to maintain a high level of system efficiency and reducing the risk of downtime.

- **Backup and Data Protection:** SQT's data is safeguarded with a backup system. This setup ensures that critical data is regularly backed up and can be quickly restored in the event of data loss, providing a fast and efficient backup and recovery service. Backup monitoring tools are also in place to ensure all backups are successfully completed.
- **Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery:** The IT service provider implements a proactive data recovery monitoring service to detect potential risks in real time, enabling swift resolution of issues before they impact operations. In addition, a disaster recovery plan is in place to ensure rapid recovery in the event of a major system failure, ensuring minimal disruption to business activities.
- **Firewall Protection and Monitoring:** The IT company manages SQT's firewall system to provide strong, real-time protection against external threats. This includes monitoring for suspicious activity and preventing unauthorised access to the network.
- **Antivirus Monitoring and Management:** SQT employs a multi-tiered approach to virus protection, utilising advanced antivirus software to protect against malicious code, viruses, and other cyber threats. This system is continuously monitored and updated to stay ahead of evolving security risks.
- **Help Desk and Onsite Support:** End-user support is provided through a dedicated help desk available via email, phone, and remote access to SQT systems. When necessary, onsite support is also available to address more complex technical issues. This ensures that users can quickly access assistance for any technical difficulties they encounter, minimizing downtime and maintaining productivity.

Additionally, SQT's website is supported by an external IT provider specialising in web management. This service includes ongoing website maintenance, updates, and technical support to ensure that the site remains secure, functional, and up to date with the latest standards.

## 5.2 Management Information System

SQT's Management Information System (MIS) has been highly customised for SQT's needs. The system is capable of:

- maintaining secure learner records for current use and historical review.
- providing reports required for internal quality management and improvement.
- generating data required for, and compatible with, external regulatory, professional or national systems as appropriate.
- generating statistical and other reports to meet internal and external information requirement.

The information system is restricted to access by authorised administration users to ensure accuracy and integrity of data.

## 5.3 Information for Decision Making

Specific reports are generated for each governance unit in order to ensure that timely analysis is undertaken to support informed decision making across all areas of the organisation.

Internal SQT staff maintain a central KPI worksheet, which is directly linked to SQT's strategic planning documentation. Relevant KPI's are included in reports considered by each quality assurance unit. This KPI reporting includes quality indicators relating to both programme provision and the day-to-day running and strategic objectives of SQT. This reporting provides vital information for monitoring strategic performance, operational aspects of the organisation, as well as the quality of programme provision and supporting services offered by SQT.

## 5.4 Synchronous Online Learning Platforms

Zoom is SQT's standard video conferencing platform to deliver its synchronous learning elements. However, MS Teams is also utilised depending on client preference (for in-house programmes). These platforms facilitate live synchronous sessions, enabling real-time interaction between Tutors and learners. Features such as breakout rooms for group discussions, screen sharing for presentations, integrated polling and Q&A for interactive feedback are leveraged to enhance the learning experience. Additionally, these platforms support the recording of sessions, where appropriate and both platforms support closed captioning.

## 5.5 Teaching & Learning Tools

Tutors are encouraged to explore and use a variety of tools and technologies to enhance online teaching and learning. However, to ensure consistency, quality and accessibility across all programmes, the following criteria must be met when selecting tools or technologies for use in online learning environments:

### 1. Alignment with Learning Objectives and Pedagogical Value

- The tool or technology must directly support the learning objectives of the programme or course.
- It should facilitate the achievement of specific skills, knowledge, or competencies outlined in the course curriculum.
- The tool should enhance the learning experience by promoting engagement, collaboration, and interaction.

### 2. Ease of Use and Accessibility

- The tool must be user-friendly for both tutors and learners, with minimal technical complexity.
- The tool should work seamlessly across various devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones) and operating systems.

### 3. Data Security and Privacy

- Tools should have clear terms of use regarding data storage, ownership, and data harvesting practices, particularly if they involve cloud-based services. It must be explicit whether and how any data will be collected, used, or shared, ensuring full transparency for all users.

- SQT's responsibility is to ensure that learner engagement tools do not engage in any data harvesting or tracking features, a checklist is used to assess the appropriate software.

#### **4. Flexibility**

- It should be flexible enough to adapt to various teaching methods, including synchronous and asynchronous learning environments.

#### **5. Integration with Existing Systems**

- The tool should be easy to implement and manage alongside existing systems (e.g., Moodle, Zoom and MS Teams) without causing disruptions.

#### **6. Technical Support and Training**

- The tool provider should offer reliable technical support and resources to troubleshoot issues that may arise during use.

#### **7. Sustainability and Long-Term Viability**

- The tool should have a proven track record of regular updates, improvements, and long-term viability to ensure it remains relevant over time.

If the tool incurs additional costs for SQT, these should be evaluated and approved by the Managing Director prior to use. In this case, new tools should undergo a pilot phase where tutors can test their functionality and suitability before broader implementation. Tutors are required to complete an evaluation form to assess the tool based on these criteria, ensuring it meets SQT's standards before full adoption.

## **5.6 Learning Management System (LMS) – Moodle**

SQT uses the Moodle platform as its Learning Management System (LMS). This platform provides a secure resource repository and allows for the upload of assignment submission and subsequent capture of Tutor feedback on longer programmes. All QQI learners and other learners on programmes of 5 days duration or longer have access to Moodle. The system is hosted, maintained and supported by an external IT company with specific expertise in the system.

## **5.7 Maintenance and Backups**

Maintenance and backups are managed by the relevant external provider for each system as follows:

- SQT employ the services of an external IT company with responsibility for the ongoing support, maintenance and security of the entire IT infrastructure (refer to section 5.1 above).
- The Management Information System (MIS) provider delivers the required technical expertise for the ongoing support and operation of the system, including back-ups of all data.
- SQT's Moodle support company are responsible for the ongoing maintenance and customisation of the Moodle platform.

## 5.8 Cybersecurity Measures

SQT is committed to ensuring the security and protection of all data and information managed by the organisation. To mitigate risks associated with unauthorised access, data breaches and cyberattacks, the following cybersecurity measures are in place:

- **Access Controls:** Role-based access is implemented to ensure that only authorised personnel can access specific data.
- **Multifactor Authentication:** For all staff logging into the SQT network remotely, multifactor authentication provides an additional layer of security by requiring both a password and a second form of verification to ensure authorised access.
- **Regular Security Audits:** SQT's External IT Service Provider provides conducts ongoing security monitoring of all IT systems to identify vulnerabilities and strengthen protection measures.
- **Staff Awareness:** All staff are provided with regular cybersecurity awareness update, ensuring they understand the importance of data security and the proper handling of sensitive information.
- **Incident Response Plan:** In the event of a data breach or cybersecurity incident, SQT has a set of procedures in place to manage and respond to incidents, aiming to minimise potential impacts and ensure any necessary notifications are made to relevant parties. The approach follows industry best practices and aims to comply with applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

The Managing Director (MD) holds overall responsibility for ensuring that these cybersecurity measures are effectively implemented and regularly reviewed to safeguard all data managed by SQT.

## 5.9 Retention and Destruction

Record retention is operated in accordance with legal obligations under GDPR and in accordance with SQT's retention schedule. Refer to [QAP8-2: Data Protection Policy](#) and Privacy Statement which is accessible [here](#).

## 6. POLICY MONITORING

Responsibility	Frequency	Methods
Managing Director	Per QA audit schedule	- Review of documentation as set out in QAP2-1: Ongoing Review and Update of QA Documents.
Managing Director	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of updates / requirements wrt reporting received from of third parties such as awarding bodies and other external stakeholders</li> <li>- Feedback received from internal and external stakeholders wrt reporting</li> <li>- Reports of data audits</li> </ul>

## 7. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No	Approval Date	Description of Revision	Originator	Approved By
2.0	12/3/19	New document format.	Senior Management Team	Board of Directors
3.0	24/10/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sections 1 to 4 have been amended to incorporate blended and fully online learning</li> <li>- The following sections have been added:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 5.4: Synchronous Learning Platforms</li> <li>o 5.7: T&amp;L Tools and Platforms</li> <li>o 6: Cybersecurity Measures</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Senior Management Team	Board of Directors

