Policy Title:	Accessible Information Policy
Description:	To establish minimum requirements and good practice recommendations for accessible information policy within the Institute, improving transparency and accessibility of information for both students and staff alike.
Author (Position):	Vice President (Academic Affairs) and Registrar
Version:	1
Approved By:	MIE Governing Body
Policy Approval Date:	January 2021
Date of Next Policy Review:	January 2024 (or as necessary)

Accessible Information Policy

1. Context

Marino Institute of Education (MIE) recognises the importance of information being accessible to both students and staff alike. MIE is committed to ensuring that this information meets standards that reflect good practice in higher education.

2. Purpose

This policy will establish minimum requirements and good practice recommendations for accessible information policy within the Institute, improving transparency and accessibility of information for both students and staff alike.

3. Benefits

3.1 Students and staff will have equal opportunity in education.

3.2 Students and staff will be able to access all facets of Institute life.

3.3 Materials produced by MIE will be provided in a relevant and accessible manner to students, staff and service users across the nine equality grounds, in accordance with the Accessible Information Policy. The Accessible Information Policy is a key element of the implementation of both the MIE Equality Policy and the Disability Act 2005.

4. Principles

4.1 MIE is committed to promoting equality in all aspects of its activity: employment, education and service provision.

4.2 MIE is committed to non-discrimination for students, staff and service users in relation to all of the nine grounds specified in equality legislation.

4.3 MIE will seek to identify any barriers to full participation in university life as a student, staff member or service user, and take action to redress these as appropriate.

4.4 MIE strives to be inclusive of all in the university community and will seek to accommodate diversity in service provision where practicable. These commitments can apply to groups outside the nine grounds of equality legislation. MIE is fully dedicated to the ongoing implementation of these commitments, as outlined in Section 2 of this policy.

4.3 The guiding principles of the policy work alongside the requirements of the Disability Act 2005, the Universities Act 1997, the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 (Employment Equality Act 1998, Equality Act 2004, Protection of Employment (Exceptional Collective Redundancies and Related Matters) Act 2007 (insofar as it relates to the previous two Acts), Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008, Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011 and the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015) and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 (Equal Status Act 2000, Intoxicating Liquor Act 2003, Equality Act 2004, Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2008, Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011, Equal Status (Amendment) Act 2012, Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 and the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018).

5. Print Communication

5.1 All Institute publications should be written in as clear and jargon-free a language as possible.

5.2 The Institute recommends the following convention for font style. Use a sans-serif font (e.g. Arial, Verdana, Calibri). It should be at least size 12. Line spacing should be 1.5. Underlining and italicising text should be avoided. Text should be left-aligned. A good contrast should be used between the font and background colour.

5.3 It is not feasible for all Institute documents to be readily available in all formats. MIE will make available on request in accessible formats the following documents:

    i. MIE Strategic Plan

    ii. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Prospectus

    iii. Annual Report

    iv. MIE Calendar and Regulations[1]

    v. Guide to College Services[2]

    vi. Course Handbooks[3]

    vii. Application Forms for all Services[4]

    viii. Information and Guidance Leaflets on Services[2]

    ix. Policy Documents[5]

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[1] See Assessment Handbook
[2] See Student Support Services
[3] See section 12 of this Policy
[4] Forms are available from the Registrar's Office
[5] See MIE Quality Assurance

Examples of accessible formats available are:

a. Online accessible electronic formats available to download

b. Large print version (at least 16 font size point)

c. Braille

d. Audio version in English and Irish

e. Video in ISL (Irish Sign Language)

6. E-learning tool – Accessibility Statement

MIE will ensure that, for example, where materials cannot be provided in an accessible format, alternatives will be provided where possible. Any web tools or e-learning platform should meet Web Content Accessibility (level 2) Guidelines (WCAG).

7. Person-to-Person Communication

MIE will ensure that information will be provided in an accessible manner when speaking to a person with a hearing impairment. Appropriate assistance will be provided to people with disabilities to access information on the range of services that are provided by the Institute. Sign language interpreters may be provided for public events, meetings, interviews and other events where necessary and where requested in advance to the organiser of event. Plans are currently underway to have an induction loop installed in the Institute.

8. Digital Technology Procurement

To ensure MIE makes digital technologies accessible to all, tenderers and the digital technology procured are expected to be compliant with all statutory requirements. Any digital technology procurement should be done with regard to the Institute's Procurement Policy[6]. Accessibility and the requirement to meet web policy guidelines will be included when procuring any new tools software or hardware.

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[6] See Purchasing of Goods and Procurement of Services

9. Institute Organised Events

9.1 All Institute events should be accessible to all possible attendees and every effort should be made to ensure accessibility features are considered.

9.2 Wherever possible, ensure events are held in fully accessible venues, but it is recognised that older buildings do not meet this level of accessibility.

9.3 When publicising events, ensure there is a standard accessibility contact statement on all publicity, including print ads, web pages and information flyers. An example of this statement is 'Please indicate if you have an access requirement so that we may facilitate you in attending this event.'

9.4 Ensure that sign language interpreters are situated in proximity to the event speaker and within the sight line of deaf attendee(s) so that both the interpreter and speaker can be viewed simultaneously. Arrange for spot lighting to be on the sign language interpreter.

9.5 Real-time captioning: sometimes an alternative option for deaf/hard of hearing attendees. Real-time captioners with laptop monitors should be seated next to the attendees, for example. Real-time captioners will require that some space be set aside for the placement of equipment.

10. Policy Evaluation

The monitoring and implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Disability Service. The Disability Service reports on a yearly basis to the Equality Committee on areas which the Institute has addressed and where further work is needed. This policy will be evaluated and monitored on a regular basis through methods such as:

i. Monitoring and updating of the Towards Inclusive (TIC) website to ensure relevant resources and help are available to all staff.

ii. Requesting and considering feedback received from the Institute's community on the usefulness and benefit of providing information in an accessible format.

iii. Informing members of any future Equality Committees in the Institute of changes in relation to legislation and policy regarding accessibility in provision of information.

The Institute takes note of its obligations regarding access and equality, especially those set out in recent legislation. The Disability Act (2005) requires public bodies such as MIE to ensure, over time, that buildings and services are accessible to people with disabilities. It

places an obligation on MIE to integrate disability service provision with mainstream services where this is practical and appropriate.

11. Disability Act Accessible Information Requirements[7]:

i.   Section 28 (1) (a) – Each public body is required to ensure, as far as practicable, that information which is orally provided to the public is provided in an accessible format, where so requested by persons with hearing impairments.

ii. Section 28 (1) (b) – Each public body is required to ensure, as far as practicable, that written information and communications which it provides to the public are communicated in an accessible format where so requested by persons with visual impairments.

iii. Section 28(2) – Each public body is required to ensure, as far as practicable, that communications in electronic form which it provides to the public are communicated in an accessible format to persons with visual impairments availing of adaptive technology.

iv. Section 28 (3) – Each public body must ensure that, as far as practicable, information which it publishes which is directly relevant to persons with intellectual disabilities, is made available to them in clear language that they easily understand.

v.   Section 26 (1) (c) – Expert advice: A public body must, where appropriate, ensure the availability of appropriate expertise and skills to advise it in relation to making its services accessible. Such expertise can be made available within the organisation, or, where appropriate, sourced externally. The Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies (as published by the National Disability Authority) provides further information on how a public sector body is expected to meet these requirements.

12. Related Documents

12.1 [MIE Equality Policy](#)

12.2 [MIE Strategic Plan](#)

12.3 [Assessment Handbook](#)

12.4 [Purchasing of Goods and Procurement of Services](#)

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[7] [Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies - Core Elements of the Code](#)

12.5 Course Handbooks

i. [Bachelor in Science Early Childhood Education Handbook](#)

ii. [Bachelor in Science Education Studies Handbook](#)

iii. [Bachelor in Education Handbook](#)

iv. [Lámhleabhar Clair don Bhaitsiléir san Oideachas Trí Mheán na Gaeilge](#)

v. [Master in Education Studies Handbook](#)

vi. [Master in Education Studies Handbook Year 1 (MES Visual Arts, MES Inquiry-based Learning, MES Leadership in Christian Education)](#)

vii. [Professional Diploma in Education Further Education Handbook](#)

viii. [Professional Diploma in Education Further Education Educational Placement Handbook](#)

ix. [Professional Master in Education Primary Teaching Handbook](#)

x. [Trinity International Foundation Programme Handbook](#)