

Code of Practice for response to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act)

Introduction

[The Freedom of Information Act](#) (Fol) gives individuals, and organisations, the right to access information held by the University and other public authorities. Any person requesting information has the following rights

- To be informed, in writing, whether the University holds the information
- To have the information communicated to him/her

Fol requests

A valid request should: -

- Be in writing (emails are acceptable). Requests for environmental information can be verbal e.g. telephone request, and should be dealt with in accordance with [Environmental Information Regulations](#)
- Include the name and address of the applicant (an email address is valid)
- Describe the information required

The University will continue to respond to informal enquiries where possible. Where the request does not contain sufficient information to proceed, the applicant will be contacted and asked to provide further information. The 20 working day deadline will not commence until the necessary information has been received. The individual must be provided with advice and assistance in making their request and describing the information requested, where necessary.

University Code of Practice

Response to Requests

1. Routine communications will be dealt with in accordance with usual practice and within the 20 working day deadline
2. Non-routine requests will be dated on receipt and passed to the person with responsibility for the requested information without delay. Responsibility will be at an appropriate level e.g. Deans of Schools or Heads of Department/Units

responsible for the requested information. A copy of the request will be forwarded to the Information and Records Manager

3. Where more than one person is responsible for the information the request should be forwarded to the Information and Records Manager, who will co-ordinate the request

4. The Information and Records Manager will record the request in the FoI Request Register

5. The member of staff responsible for the request will:

- Check if the information is readily accessible e.g. on the University's website and inform the applicant where the information can be located (if due to circumstances the individual cannot access the information in this form then a copy should be provided in the format requested where practicable)

or

- Make arrangements for locating the information
- Examine the information to ensure that the documents are appropriate for disclosure
- Arrange for the information to be communicated to the individual within the 20 working day deadline, a copy of the response will be forwarded to the Information and Records Manager

6. If the request cannot be responded to immediately, an acknowledgement will be sent to the individual, and a full response provided as soon as possible, and within the 20 working day deadline

7. If, due to exceptional circumstances the information cannot be supplied within the deadline the Information and Records Manager should be advised of the reasons for the delay; the Information and Records Manager will contact the individual

8. Information should be provided in the format requested where possible; where this is not practicable the Information and Records Manager should be informed

Refusals

All refusals to disclose information should be referred to the University Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Governors, who will liaise with Deans of Schools or

Heads of Departments. Disclosure will only be refused in the following circumstances: -

1. The information requested is third party data and would be classed as personal data; the request will then be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
2. Another exemption applies; where appropriate the public interest will be considered before a decision is made. In some circumstances the application of an exemption may need to be referred to the University's legal representatives or the Information Commissioner. The Information and Records Manager will contact the applicant and inform them of any delays likely due to the consideration of exemptions and public interest.
3. The request is vexatious, or the same information has previously been provided to the applicant
4. The cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit (£450); the individual will be informed of any similar information which may satisfy their requirements and provided with information up-to the limit
5. Where the individual has not responded to reasonable requests for further information

Where a refusal is made the individual will be informed of the complaints procedure, and the right to refer to the matter to the Information Commissioner

Monitoring and review

The outcome of requests will be recorded in the FoI request register. Management information obtained from logs of requests will be used to review procedures.

Related Information

[FoI Complaints Procedure](#)

Contact: Information and Records Manager 01902 322444

Version	2	Author	Information and Records Manager
Approved date	13/12/2004	Approved by	Executive
Review date	12/09	Updated	19/11/2007