



DONCASTER COLLEGE

DONCASTER COLLEGE PUBLICATION SCHEME

**In accordance with Section 19
The Freedom of Information Act 2000**

CONTENTS

SECTION A:	INTRODUCTION TO THE PUBLICATION SCHEME/ FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000	
1	Background	2
2	Doncaster College	2
3	About this Publication Scheme	3
4	Requesting Information	4
5	Payment for Information	5
6	Responsibility for the Scheme	5
7	Copyright and Liability Matters	5
SECTION B:	CLASSES OF INFORMATION	6
	An explanation of Terms	6
Class 1:	Who we are and what we do	7
Class 2:	What we spend and how we spend it	9
Class 3:	What our priorities are and how we are doing	11
Class 4:	How we make decisions	13
Class 5:	The services we offer	14
APPENDICES		
A	Information Request Form	18
B	Freedom of Information Act : Frequently Asked Questions – A Guide for the Public	19
C	Schedule of Charges	21

Section A: INTRODUCTION TO THE PUBLICATION SCHEME/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

1. Background

This document (Publication Scheme) has been compiled to ensure that Doncaster College complies with the terms of Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 whose requirements are set out in Section 3 below. The Publication Scheme has been approved by the Information Commissioner and is intended to improve the availability of information to the public. It covers a range of documents and will be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals.

2. About Doncaster College

Doncaster College is the largest provider of further education in South Yorkshire. It is also one of the largest providers of higher education in the region.

During the 2008/09 academic year, more than 19,000 people enrolled on more than 500 qualifications. The College employs around 1,100 staff and accommodates students aged 14+.

The main college campus is the £65m Waterfront development in the centre of Doncaster. The Hub, as it is known, opened in September 2006 and is home to some of the best educational facilities in the country.

The University Centre Doncaster, is the Hub's sister campus - set in 126 acres of countryside at High Melton, six miles west of Doncaster. The campus is home to many higher education courses, and houses Doncaster Business School, the College's popular Faculty of Arts, The Stables Conference Centre and Britain's first centre of excellence for relationship studies - The Relate Institute.

Our Mission ***“To serve the employment, education and training needs of Doncaster and beyond in ways that are accessible and responsive. To develop self confidence, promote personal growth and development, and ensure success for all who join and work with us”***

Our Values Our six core values identify the principles which will guide the College through the implementation stage of recovery 2009-12, illustrating the basic minimum threshold for the daily operation, function and behaviour of our organisation. They may be enumerated as follows:

- 1 Professionalism and Stewardship
- 2 Trust and Integrity
- 3 Focus on the Customer
- 4 Commitment to Continuous Improvement and Excellence in all we do
- 5 Mutual Understanding and Support
- 6 Teamwork and Collaboration

Strategic Priorities 2009-1012

- Objective 1: Enable the College to achieve full financial recovery within three years through the maximisation of income, cost efficiency savings, financial transparency and diligence. (Reference Confidential Recovery Plan)
- Objective 2: Raise standards, achieve good grades at Ofsted inspections and maintain high standards in HEFCE IQER. (Reference Quality Improvement Plan 2009)
- Objective 3: Re-configure the College to enable the efficiency and effectiveness required to meet the changing needs of our core business. (Reference Restructure Plan 2009)
- Objective 4: Strengthen strategic alliances and partnerships that drive forward national and regional objectives around entrepreneurship, employability and innovation to ensure learning, training and any subsidiary company activity meets the needs of local businesses and the wider community.
- Objective 5: Create a roadmap for Higher Education learning and progression within Doncaster that assists in the achievement of the broader Borough aspiration and clarifies our role within it.
- Objective 6: Enable access to a range of learning opportunities in a College which values and promotes diversity, opposes discriminatory practices and where staff and students feel safe and are safe.
- Objective 7: Produce a property strategy to deliver strategic priorities.

3. Publication Scheme

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 public authorities must produce a Publication Scheme describing:

- the information they will publish
- the format in which the information will be published
- whether or not the information is available free of charge

This Publication Scheme is **not an exhaustive list** of information held by the College. It does, however, describe the types of information which are routinely available and facilitates access to that information. College documents, including the Scheme itself, can be made available in Braille, on audiotape and in some other languages upon request. Please clearly specify the format required when requesting information.

This Publication Scheme is available on the Doncaster College official website – www.don.ac.uk in College reception areas and on the College intranet. Wherever possible, direct links to information sources will be made available.

Material included in this Publication Scheme may occasionally need to be amended. This may be for confidentiality purposes or for reasons relating to potential invasion of privacy, commercial sensitivity, legal or medical professional privilege.

4. Requesting Information

Post, fax, or email requests should be clearly marked "INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST" to ensure immediate attention. You may find it helpful to complete sections 1 and 2 of the Information Request Form (Ref: FOI (R) 1). A copy of this form can be found at the end of this Publication Scheme (Appendix A). Written requests should be sent to:

"The Freedom of Information Officer"

The Principalship
The Hub
Doncaster College
Chappell Drive
Doncaster
DN1 2RF

Tel: 01302 553553
Fax: 01302 553559
Email: FOI@don.ac.uk

In the case of requests by telephone or in person, a member of College staff will complete an Information Request Form by asking you a series of questions. You may be sent a copy of the form and asked to confirm the details by signing and returning it. This is simply to help us ensure that we have fully understood every request and to allow us to monitor our response times.

We will respond to your request as soon as possible and, in any event, we will respond formally within 20 working days of receiving it.

Any complaints regarding the handling of requests for information, or appeals against the FOI Officer's decisions, should be directed in writing to the "*Executive Director of Finance and Management Information*" – at the above address.

In the unlikely event that the College is unable to provide a satisfactory solution to your complaint, you may contact the Information Commissioner's office (see below).

Please note that the release of certain types of information (including personal data) continue to be governed by the terms of the Data Protection Act following the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. For more information about the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act, access the website - www.ico.gov.uk

The Office of the Information Commissioner is responsible for promoting best practice and ensuring that organisations comply with the Freedom of Information Act. The Office can be contacted at:

Office of the Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 08456 30 60 60 or visit the website at www.ico.gov.uk

5. Payment for Information

There will normally be a fee for providing individual items listed in this Publication Scheme. You will be informed about the cost prior to provision of the requested information. Any such fees will be payable in advance. An example of the College pricing policy for information requests is shown at Appendix C.

6. Responsibility for the Scheme

A designated College Senior Manager is ultimately responsible for the College's Publication Scheme. It is intended that the Scheme will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, or as directed by the Information Commissioner.

Routine maintenance of the Publication Scheme will be performed by the college Freedom of Information Officer. Your comments and suggestions about the Scheme are welcomed. Please forward them to:

"The Freedom of Information Officer"
The Principalship
Doncaster College
The Hub
Chappell Drive
Doncaster
DN1 2RF

Tel: 01302 553553
Fax: 01302 553559
Email: FOI@don.ac.uk

7. Copyright and Liability Matters

Authorisation to reuse any material not wholly owned by the College must be sought from the copyright holders in question. Doncaster College is not liable for the contents or reliability of any external links referred to in this document, nor does it necessarily endorse any views or services referred to therein.

Section B: CLASSES OF INFORMATION

- Class 1: Who we are and what we do
- Class 2: What we spend and how we spend it
- Class 3: What our priorities are and how we are doing
- Class 4: How we make decisions
- Class 5: The services we offer

An Explanation of Terms

Items are listed in Section B in table format. The terms used in the tables are explained below:

Title	The title of the item being described/requested
Description	A short description of the item and what it contains
Available format(s)	The format(s) in which the item is normally available. Please note that the College can also prepare documents in special formats which may not be listed here (e.g. Braille, French, recorded/spoken word)
Access Route	The route via which your request will be directed in order to have it processed as quickly as possible
Fees	Whether the College will charge you for providing the item in question. Fees payable in advance.
Additional Information	Useful information about the item that is not included elsewhere in the table

Class 1: Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts

Title	An Introduction to the College
Description	Current Overview of the college
Formats	Paper, website (www.don.ac.uk); Annual Report
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	College Mission Statement
Description	Mission Statement
Formats	Paper, website (www.don.ac.uk);
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	College Management Structure
Description	College Management Structure Diagram
Formats	Paper, Electronic, website (www.don.ac.uk); Annual Report
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Governing Body / Corporation Membership
Description	Membership and expertise of the Governing Body
Formats	Paper, website http://www.don.ac.uk/mini_sites/governor/home.aspx
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	College Committees and Groups
Description	Membership, Chair, Minutes, Papers e.g. Senior Management Team, Quality Management Group
Formats	Paper
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	College Values
Description	Corporate values as defined and committed to by all staff
Formats	Paper, Electronic,
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Policies
Description	Policies (including Equality & Diversity, Race Equality Statement, Environmental, Health & Safety, Bullying & Harassment, Complaints Policy & Procedure, Employment
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	College Partnerships
Description	List of organisations working in partnership with the College identifying the relationship
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Wholly Owned Companies
Description	List of companies wholly owned by the College
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Class 2: What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audits

Title	Financial Accounts
Description	Audited and approved college financial accounts
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Finance)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Title	College Purchasing Advice, Guidance and Procedures
Description	Documents relating to purchasing within the college (including Purchase Order processing routines, Account structures, Asset disposal forms etc.)
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Finance)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Title	College Fee and Pricing Policies
Description	Information on tuition fees and charges for all college services
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Finance)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Title	Resource Planning
Description	Information that defines how the college undertakes its planning and resource allocation, how it regulates the deployment of resources and how it publishes the outcomes
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Finance)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Examples include staff pay and grading structures, financial regulation and procedures, contracts awarded, use of college credit card, fixed asset investment, treasury management policy

Title	Hiring of Contractors / Hiring of External Contractors
Description	Staff guidance on correct procedures to adopt in hiring contractors
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Estates)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Financial Audit Reports
Description	Financial Audit Reports
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Finance)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	College Audit Reports
Description	Management letters and audit summaries (internal and external)
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

CLASS 3: What our priorities are and how we are doing

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews

Title	Strategic and Operational Plans
Description	Strategic and operational plans, including Self Assessment reports and quality improvement plans
Formats	Paper booklet, Electronic, website (www.don.ac.uk)
Access Route	General (Quality & Standards)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Teaching & Learning strategy, academic standards and quality procedures This information can be provided for the previous three years if requested.

Title	Governing Body Sub-Committee meetings
Description	Papers and Minutes of meetings of sub-committees of the Governing Body
Formats	Paper, Electronic, website (www.don.ac.uk)
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	An up-to-date overview of the governing body sub-committee structure can be supplied on request.

Title	College Service Standards and Performance Data
Description	Service standards (including performance monitoring criteria) for the college and individual departments
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Quality and Standards Unit)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Inspection Reports and Annual Monitoring Visits
Description	OfSTED inspection reports and summaries
Formats	Paper, Electronic via OfSTED website http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/130526
Access Route	General (Quality & Standards)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Equality & Diversity
Description	Performance data, college policies on equality matters, equality impact assessments, single equality scheme
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship / Quality & Standards / Human Resources)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Further information can also be found on the College's website - http://www.don.ac.uk/about_college/equality_diversity.aspx

Title	Health & Safety
Description	Performance data, College policies & procedures on Health & Safety, Risk Assessments etc.
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Health & Safety)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Teaching and Learning
Description	Committee Minutes
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Quality and Standards)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Staff/Students Consultation
Description	Minutes of Student Parliament and JCC
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Quality and Standards)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

CLASS 4: How we make decisions

Decision making processes and records of decisions

Title	Governing Body Papers and Minutes
Description	Papers and Minutes of meetings of the Governing Body (excluding confidential items) and various sub-committees
Formats	Paper, website
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Confidential items will be published in line with the Corporation's policy on Part B papers. Further information on this can be requested from the College FOI Officer

Title	College Management Team Meeting Minutes
Description	Papers and minutes of all meetings held within the college – including Executive, Senior Management Team, Strategic Quality Management Team, including the staff Joint Consultative Committee (excluding confidential items)
Formats	Paper
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	A copy of the college committee / working group structures, terms of reference and membership can be supplied on request.

Title	College Policies and Procedures
Description	Information outlining college policies and procedures for staff
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship, Human Resources)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Including : policies and procedures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Staff charter◆ Student services◆ Human Resources – including recruitment◆ Code of conduct for members of governing body◆ Equality & Diversity◆ Health & Safety

Title	Complaints Policies and Procedures
Description	Information on how individuals / organisations can provide feedback to the college on how any complaints will be dealt with
Formats	Paper, Electronic, Website – www.don.ac.uk
Access Route	General (Quality & Standards)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Consultation with Unions
Description	JCC Minutes
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship, Human Resources)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

CLASS 5: The Services we offer

Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters

Title	Student Charter, Handbook, Publications
Description	Detailed booklet describing the Student Charter. Key policies and various publications related to student matters/life at the college
Formats	Paper booklets, website http://www.don.ac.uk/student_area/home.aspx
Access Route	General (Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Student Admissions Policies
Description	Information on admission/enrolment of new students, including policies and procedures covering the assessment of external qualifications
Formats	Paper, Electronic, www.don.ac.uk
Access Route	General (Finance / Customer Services)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info	Further information can be found on the Learner Services page on the college website http://www.don.ac.uk/learner_services.aspx Information for international students can also be found on the International page on the website

Title	Student Accommodation Policy
Description	Information on residential accommodation offered by the college and rules/regulations
Formats	Paper, Electronic, website - www.don.ac.uk
Access Route	General (Finance / Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Information for international students can also be found on the international page on the college website : http://www.don.ac.uk/international_students.aspx

Title	Student Discipline
Description	Information relating to the required conduct of students and disciplinary proceedings against students. Including plagiarism policy, Harassment policy (staff and students), alcohol misuse policy etc.,
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Customer Services / Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Student Liaison
Description	Information on the structure and functioning of staff/student consultative committees or other liaison groups, including Student Parliament, outcomes of student surveys and action plans
Formats	Paper, Electronic, website - http://www.don.ac.uk/student_area/home.aspx
Access Route	General (Customer Services / Quality Unit)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Title	Course Information
Description	Including induction booklets, schemes of work, lesson plans
Formats	Paper Electronic. Website - http://www.don.ac.uk/courses.aspx
Access Route	General (Course Managers)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Title	Welfare Information Leaflets
Description	Information about sources of finance & support available to students
Formats	Paper Electronic, website www.don.ac.uk
Access Route	General (Customer Services)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Title	College Network Services – Information for Network Users
Description	Information for network users
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Learning Resource Centres, Computer IT Services)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Includes general rules and conditions of use for staff/students i.e. IT acceptable use policy, IT e-mail usage policy, IT usage and security policy, IT hardware policy
Title	Data and Information Policies
Description	Information on the college handling of data and disclosure. Data Protection policy, IT security policy,
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Registry / Principalship)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Description	Information on the college's internal quality audit programmes and annual reviews
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship / Quality & Standards)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Includes information on programme approval procedures, monitoring and review; assessment procedures and outcomes; student satisfaction. Information is available to teams carrying out internal reviews of quality & standards.

Title	Student Assessment Strategy
Description	Information on the regulations and/or policy governing student assessment / examinations
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Principalship/Quality & Standards)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Includes examination periods, regulations, appeal procedures and plagiarism policy

Title	Student Welfare
Description	Information on support provided to students including Child Protection policy, Education and Guidance services
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Customer Services)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Learning Resource Centres – Using the Library
Description	Using the library – welcome leaflet and guidance notes
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Learning Resource Centres)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Learning Resource Centre Misuse Procedures
Description	Guidance for staff in appropriate procedures to follow in dealing with misuse of Learning Resources
Formats	Paper, Electronic, available through college learner portal
Access Route	General (Learning Resource Centres)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

Title	Services to Businesses
Description	Information on the college's services to employers. Including course leaflets, Training Needs Analysis documentation, pricing policies
Formats	Paper, Electronic
Access Route	General (Academy of Work Force Development)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C
Add. Info.	Further information can be found on the College's website - http://www.don.ac.uk/mini_sites/services_to_business/home.aspx
Title	Public Relations
Description	Information that the college uses to publicise its facilities and activities – including press releases, prospectuses, course brochures, newsletters, magazines and student handbooks/publications
Formats	Paper, Electronic, website- www.don.ac.uk
Access Route	General (Marketing)
Fees	Fee calculated per schedule of charges for FOI requests – refer to Appendix C

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FORM – FOI (R) 1

Section 1 Applicant Details

Name of applicant: _____ **Date request received:** __ __ / __ __ / 20 __ __

Position: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No: _____

Fax No: _____

Email: _____

Section 2 Information Request

Information/Item requested	
Format (check formats available on Publication Scheme)	
Special requirements (e.g. Braille):	
Intended use of information (Optional)	
Additional information requested	

Send completed form via post to “The Freedom of Information Officer”, The Principalship,
The Hub, Doncaster College, Chappell Drive, Doncaster DN1 2RF
Or Email to : FOI@don.ac.uk

Section 3A Processing of Request (College use only)

Request received by:		Date received:	/ /20
Signed:		Date compiled:	/ /20
Information compiled by:		Date issued:	/ /20
Signed:			
Information issued to applicant by:			
Signed:			

Please note that shaded sections are to be completed by office staff not applicant
Office staff should attach any related documentation to this form before filing (e.g. written request for information, copy of covering letter sent to applicant)
All queries should be referred to the Freedom of Information Officer

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – FAQs FOR THE PUBLIC

Extracted from Information Commissioners Office website – www.ico.gov.uk

Q: What can I request under the Freedom of Information Act?

You have the right to request any information held by public authorities. The Act allows access to recorded information, such as emails, meeting minutes, research or reports, held by public authorities in England, Northern Ireland and Wales and some authorities located in Scotland. Scottish public authorities are subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Q: Which Public Authorities are covered by the Freedom of Information Act?

The Freedom of Information Act applies to information that is held by a public authority and sets out which bodies and offices are considered public authorities for the purpose of the Act:

- government departments (this includes Non Departmental Government Bodies);
- Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the National Assembly for Wales;
- the armed forces (but not Special Forces or units working with Government Communications Headquarters);
- local authorities;
- NHS bodies;
- the Police;
- other bodies and Offices such as regulators and advisory committees;
- Further Education Colleges;
- Wholly Owned Companies; and
- some bodies are only covered for certain sorts of information such as the BBC and Channel 4;

Other bodies not listed in the Act can be brought under the Act by a section 4 or section 5 order, these are laid by the [Ministry of Justice](#).

If you wish to find out if a particular body is covered by the Act you should contact the Ministry of Justice who have responsibility for coverage. A basic guide to whether you are covered can be found on the website of the [Department for Constitutional Affairs](#), although this is no longer updated.

Q: Who can request information?

Under the Freedom of Information Act, any individual, anywhere in the world, is able to make a request to a public authority for information. An applicant is entitled to be informed in writing as to whether the information is held and have the information communicated to them. If any of the information is to be refused, the organisation must provide you with a Refusal notice which clearly states the reasons why it is withholding the information you have requested and making clear the appeals process.

Q: How do I make a request?

Your request must:

- be made in writing (this can be electronically e.g., fax, email);
- state the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence; and
- describe the information requested.

Q: Will I be able to get any information I want?

Not always. The Act recognises that there will be valid reasons why some kinds of information may be withheld, such as if its release would prejudice national security or commercial interests.

Public authorities are not obliged to deal with vexatious or repeated requests. In addition the Act does not provide the right of access to personal information about yourself. This information can be requested under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Q: What are the cost limits for a Freedom of Information Act request?

There is no 'flat rate' fee to receive information and in many cases the information will be provided to you free of charge.

An authority can refuse a request if it estimates that it will cost them in excess of the appropriate cost limit to fulfil your request. The limit is £600 for central government and Parliament and £450 for other public authorities.

Where the limit is not exceeded, the only charges that can be passed to you are those associated with providing the information, for example photocopying and postage. These are collectively known as disbursements.

An authority may be willing to provide the information even where the cost exceeds the limit if you are willing to pay the full costs in dealing with the request. They can also decide to provide the information free of charge, despite the application of the appropriate limit if they wish.

Q: What if I need to pay a fee?

If you need to pay a fee for 'disbursements', such as photocopying and postage, or because the costs exceed the appropriate limit, you should be issued a Fees Notice within 20 working days of receipt of the request. When you are issued the Fees Notice, the 20 working day limit for responding stops, and then will start again when the public authority receive payment. If they do not receive the fee within three months they are not obliged to comply with the request.

Q: Can I choose how I receive the information?

When making a request you can state a preference of how you want the information communicated to you. This could be providing a hard copy, or an electronic copy of the information, providing you an opportunity to inspect a record containing the information or providing a digest or summary of the information. The public authority should give effect to this as far as is reasonably practical, or notify you why it is not so.

Q: How quickly will I receive a response?

You must be informed in writing whether the public authority holds the information requested and if so, have the information communicated to you, promptly, but not later than 20 working days after they receive the request. In some circumstances a request may be refused. If this is the case, generally a Refusal Notice should have been issued to you. This should state the exemption providing the basis for refusal within the Freedom of Information Act and why it applies to the information you requested. This notice must also be communicated to you within the 20 working day time period.

A limited number of factors could extend this period

Q: What are the rules in the Freedom of Information Act regarding repeated requests?

Where an authority have previously complied with a request for information which was made by any person, they are not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request from that person unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the previous request and the making of the current request.

Although there is no definition in the Freedom of Information Act of a 'reasonable interval', the ICO has [published guidance](#) that will help you determine whether a request may be 'repeated' and provides guidance for public authorities on how to deal with them.

Q: Does the Freedom of Information Act apply to personal data?

The Freedom of Information Act gives applicants the right to request information held by public authorities. It does not provide a right of access to personal information about you. If someone is requesting their personal data this should be handled as a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act. More can be found about this on the ICO website. Some data about others may be available, however it must not contravene any of the data protection principles of the Data Protection Act.

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES FOR FOI REQUESTS

This table describes how the College would arrive at fees for chargeable FOI requests:

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @ 7p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Photocopying/printing @ 10p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation
Staff costs of data retrieval	£25 per hour	In accordance with guidance from Information Commissioner
Other	Decided on an annual basis	Fully costed to FOI requester

* the actual cost incurred by the College