



**cirencester
college**

a beacon college

Policy for Freedom of Information and Records Management

[Updated July 2009]

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires that all public authorities, including educational institutions, adopt a formal policy on FOI and a publication scheme and procedures to ensure that access to appropriate data and information is clear and meaningful.
- 1.2 Cirencester College has adopted the Model Publication Scheme for Public Authorities 2009. This scheme has been approved by the Information Commissioner as a result of the Publication Scheme Development and Maintenance Initiative.
- 1.3 The policy and publication scheme apply to all areas of the work and business of the college and is linked to college policy in respect of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 1.4 The policy sets out the default position on public access to its data and information, the exemptions that may apply, the deadlines for provision of information and associated costs.
- 1.5 This policy is available electronically on the college website and on its student and staff intranets and in paper copy from the Library, the Student Services Office, the Clerk to the Corporation, the Office of the Principal and the Office of the Deputy Principal.
- 1.6 Management of the policy and its associated procedures and records management is the responsibility of the Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal is assisted in this task by the Quality Systems Officer who maintains the records management database.
- 1.7 The policy and its operation are reviewed annually by the College Directorate and the College Corporation.

2. PUBLICATION SCHEME

2.1 General Principles of the Scheme

This publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It has been adopted without modification by Cirencester College Corporation (September 2009). This scheme commits the College to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the College. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner. The scheme commits the College:

- 2.1.1 To publish or otherwise make available, proactively and as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- 2.1.2 To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- 2.1.3 To publish or otherwise make available, proactively and as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- 2.1.4 To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- 2.1.5 To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- 2.1.6 To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- 2.1.7 To make this publication scheme available to the public.

2.2 Classes of Information

- 2.2.1 ***Who we are and what we do.*** This includes organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.
- 2.2.2 ***What we spend and how we spend it.*** This includes financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.
- 2.2.3 ***What our priorities are and how we are doing.*** This includes strategy and performance information, plans assessments, inspections and reviews.
- 2.2.4 ***How we make decisions.*** This includes our policy proposals and decisions, our decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures and consultations.
- 2.2.5 ***Our policies and procedures.*** This includes current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.
- 2.2.6 ***Lists and Registers.*** This includes information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the College.
- 2.2.7 ***The Services we offer.*** This includes advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases and other descriptions of the services we offer.
- 2.2.8 The classes of information will not generally include:
- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
 - Information in draft form.
 - Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

2.3 Making Information Available

- 2.3.1 The College will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.
- 2.3.2 Where it is within the capability of the College, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, the College will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.
- 2.3.3 In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.
- 2.3.4 Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where the College is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.
- 2.3.5 Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

3.1 Governance

- 3.1.1 Organisational structures, roles and responsibilities
- 3.1.2 Mission statement and strategic aims
- 3.1.3 Corporation membership; committee structure and terms of reference
- 3.1.4 Corporation agenda and minutes
- 3.1.5 Corporation codes of conduct and standing orders
- 3.1.6 Procedures for appointment of corporation members
- 3.1.7 Corporation quality assurance procedures

3.2 Management

- 3.2.1 Management structure, roles and responsibilities
- 3.2.2 Terms of reference, agenda and minutes of management meetings
- 3.2.3 College quality assurance procedures
- 3.2.4 Terms of reference and minutes of task-forces and committees
- 3.2.5 Review and target setting processes

3.3 Finance

- 3.3.1 College financial regulations
- 3.3.2 Structure of budgets and accounts
- 3.3.3 Contracting and procurement of goods and services
- 3.3.4 Remuneration and pensions
- 3.3.5 Annual budget and accounts
- 3.3.6 Insurance
- 3.3.7 Expenses policy and procedures

3.4 Human Resources

- 3.4.1 Recruitment policies, procedures and guidelines
- 3.4.2 Generic terms and conditions of employment
- 3.4.3 Salary grades and salary structure
- 3.4.4 Collective bargaining and consultation procedures
- 3.4.5 Grievance procedures
- 3.4.6 Disciplinary procedures
- 3.4.7 Competence procedures
- 3.4.8 Harassment, equal treatment and bullying policies
- 3.4.9 Health and Safety policy and procedures
- 3.4.10 Equality and Diversity policies
- 3.4.11 Public interest disclosures
- 3.4.12 Job vacancies and specifications
- 3.4.13 Induction and probationary procedures
- 3.4.14 Staff development policy and procedures
- 3.4.15 Staff review policy and procedures
- 3.4.16 Promotion and upgrading policy and procedures

3.4 Physical Resources

- 3.4.1 Site addresses, maps and plans
- 3.4.2 Estates and accommodation strategy
- 3.4.3 Catering policies
- 3.4.4 Cleaning policies
- 3.4.5 Grounds and building maintenance policies and procedures
- 3.4.6 Environmental protection policies
- 3.4.7 Disposal and recycling policies

3.5 Student Support

- 3.5.1 Student qualifications on entry
- 3.5.2 Classified record of student entrants
- 3.5.3 Student qualifications, progression, retention and completion data
- 3.5.4 Data on employment and training outcomes for students
- 3.5.5 Student records policies and procedures
- 3.5.6 Security and data protection policy and procedures
- 3.5.7 Admissions and enrolment policies and procedures
- 3.5.8 Codes of conduct and student disciplinary procedures
- 3.5.9 Internal student complaint and appeals procedures
- 3.5.10 Services for students with special needs
- 3.5.11 Learning development and personal development advice systems
- 3.5.12 Terms of reference, minutes and records of liaison committees
- 3.5.13 Health, welfare, counselling and advice services
- 3.5.14 Careers services
- 3.5.15 Housing and accommodation services
- 3.5.16 Financial support and hardship funds
- 3.5.17 Student Union documentation
- 3.5.18 Travel and transportation arrangements and rules

3.7 Information Services

- 3.7.1 Opening times of library and learning resource centres
- 3.7.2 Facilities-use allowances and rights of access
- 3.7.3 Rules of conduct and conditions of use
- 3.7.4 Availability of legal copyright and data protection information
- 3.7.5 Archiving and data retention procedures and access rights
- 3.7.6 Details of logging monitoring procedures
- 3.7.7 Service level agreements
- 3.7.8 Security policies
- 3.7.9 Data protection policies
- 3.7.10 Policies relating to the procurement and disposal of equipment
- 3.7.11 Collection management and preservation strategy
- 3.7.12 Guides to collections and catalogues

3.8 Teaching and Learning

- 3.8.1 Curriculum management structure and responsibilities
- 3.8.2 Academic calendar and term dates
- 3.8.3 Contact details for faculties and departments
- 3.8.4 Course and qualification listings
- 3.8.5 Course structures and specifications
- 3.8.6 Enrolment and course change procedures
- 3.8.7 Work and community experience policies and procedures
- 3.8.8 Programme approval, monitoring and review
- 3.8.9 Internal verification policy and procedures
- 3.8.10 Assessment procedures and outcomes
- 3.8.11 Examination boards, regulations, periods and dates
- 3.8.12 Appeal procedures
- 3.8.13 Policies on plagiarism and submission of coursework
- 3.8.14 Teaching and Learning policies
- 3.8.15 Lesson observation protocols
- 3.8.16 Information on charges for students

3.9 External Relations

- 3.9.1 Reports and returns to funding authorities
- 3.9.2 Reports and returns to inspecting and validating authorities
- 3.9.3 Inspection reports
- 3.9.4 Prospectuses and brochures
- 3.9.5 Entry requirement
- 3.9.6 Information about open days and marketing events
- 3.9.7 Widening participation policies
- 3.9.8 Media relations policies
- 3.9.9 Media statements and press releases
- 3.9.10 Newsletters and magazines
- 3.9.11 Website management and protocols
- 3.9.12 Information provided to enrollers and other clients
- 3.9.12 Employer engagement policies
- 3.9.14 Terms of reference of associations to which the college belongs

4. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

4.1 Documentation and Records Database

- 4.1.1 The college shall maintain a Documentation and Records database containing all internally generated and legally required data, records, policies and procedures deemed to be within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act and model publication scheme. The database will be located on the shared college network drive and in the staff and student intranets. Responsibility for the construction and upkeep of the database shall be the responsibility of the Deputy Principal, assisted by the Quality Systems Officer.
- 4.1.2 Documentation within the database shall be classified according to section 3. above and to the model scheme.
- 4.1.3 The assumption should be made that all new documentation falls within this policy. Further guidance should be obtained from the Deputy Principal.
- 4.1.4 For each entry in the database, the following shall be recorded:
- a. Author
 - b. Publication date
 - c. Class
 - d. Purpose
 - e. Statutory status
 - f. Principal audience(s)
 - g. Lifespan
 - h. Cost of access
- 4.1.5 An annual review of the database shall ensure its currency and comprehensive nature. Documents beyond their lifespan, or otherwise losing their currency, shall be transferred to a parallel archive database.
- 4.1.6 Proformas, in both electronic and paper form, shall be available to accompany the submission of records and documentation to the Deputy Principal for inclusion in the database.
- 4.1.7 The database and associated document classification shall be the basis for the more general development of an efficient and effective system of records management throughout the college.
- 4.1.8 In accordance with the model scheme, good practice and changes to the statutory regulations will inform adjustments to the database and associated records management policy and practice.
- 4.1.9 The Information and Records Directory is available on the Staff College website.

5. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

5.1 Requests for Information

- 5.1.1 A request for information from the college must be made in writing or via e-mail to all main client-interface points, receptions, library, student services, faculty offices, the Clerk to the Corporation, the Office of the Principal or the Office of the Deputy Principal.
- 5.1.2 All staff have a duty to respond to requests under the Act. Such response should be appropriate and should be based upon normal line-management and reporting arrangements. All requests must be notified to the Office of the Deputy Principal and all releases of information authorised by the Office.
- 5.1.3 The college must respond to all legitimate requests within a period of not more than 20 working days, the first day being the day of the receipt of the request or, if that day is not a working day, the first working day thereafter.
- 5.1.4 The college will provide all reasonable assistance and advice to those requesting information, wishing to request information or considering making a request for information in order to ensure they receive the most appropriate information and documentation.
- 5.1.5 Requests for information arising from the Data Protection Act will be considered within the terms of that act also.
- 5.1.6 Information held by a the College that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

5.2 Charges and Payments

- 5.2.1 The College may charge for the provision of information but aims to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public.
- 5.2.2 Charges for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum. They will only cover actual disbursements incurred such as photocopying; postage and packing and costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information. The release costs of each document or record are stated in the database. Those requesting information are advised of the charge at the outset.
- 5.2.3 Material which is provided and accessed on the College's website shall be provided free of charge.
- 5.2.4 Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by the College, justified and are in accordance with the published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.
- 5.2.5 If no payment is forthcoming within the 20 working-days period, the response time may be suspended. If no further request or contact is forthcoming from the original requester of information within 3 months of the original or a subsequent request, the college shall have the right to assume the request is no longer active.

5.3 Complaints and Appeals

- 5.3.1 Complaints about the College's conduct under the Act must be made by the customer to the College in the first instance.
- 5.3.2 If the complaint is not resolved with the college, the customer has the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner who will decide whether the request has been handled correctly and issue a Decision Notice or an Enforcement Notice accordingly.
- 5.3.3 Both parties have the right of appeal to an Information Tribunal.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

6.1 The Information Commissioner Website:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

6.2 The Joint Information and Systems Committee Website:

www.jisc.ac.uk

6.3 Association of Colleges Website:

www.feonline.net