



Freedom of Information Policy

Version 2

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Freedom of Information Policy

1. The Freedom of Information Act 2000

- 1.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 is intended to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public authorities by providing people with rights of access to the information held by them. It is expected that these rights will facilitate better public understanding of how public authorities carry out their duties, why they make the decisions they do and how they spend public money. For the purposes of the Act, public authorities include HE institutions.
- 1.2 The Act applies to recorded information held in any media, including information created before the Act came into effect on 1 January 2005.
- 1.3 The Act is enforced by the Information Commissioner, who oversees both Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation.

2. The University's responsibilities under FOI

- 2.1 The Act requires the University to provide a general right of access to all types of recorded information, subject to specific exemptions. The Act places a number of obligations on the University. This policy sets out the University's policy in relation to those obligations.

3. The Publication Scheme

- 3.1 The Act requires the University to adopt and maintain a publication scheme setting out details of the information the University will routinely make available, how the information can be obtained and whether there is any charge for it.
- 3.2 The University has adopted the model publication scheme approved by the Office of the Information Commissioner. The scheme is available at www.uca.ac.uk or in hard copy on request from the University's Freedom of Information Officer.
- 3.3 The scheme describes the information the University publishes or intends to publish under seven classes:
- Who we are and what we do
 - What we spend and how we spend it
 - What our priorities are and how we are doing
 - How we make decisions
 - Our policies and procedures
 - Lists and registers
 - The services we offer
- 3.4 The scheme makes clear how the information in each class is, or is intended to be, published i.e. paper or electronically. In providing information, the University will take into account the potential requirements of those who do not have access to the Internet, or who might require the scheme in an alternative form. Advice and guidance on obtaining information is included in the publication scheme and is available from the University's Freedom of Information Officer.
- 3.5 Information published within the scheme is available free of charge unless specified otherwise.

4. Individual requests for information

4.1 The Act requires the University to respond to individual requests for the information that it holds, unless an exemption from disclosure applies.

4.2 Requests for information must:

- Be in writing (includes e-mail and fax)
- State the name of the applicant
- State an address for correspondence
- Describe the information requested.

4.3 The University will respond in writing normally within 20 working days to individual requests for information. The University will inform applicants if it needs to exceed this deadline, for example where it is necessary to apply the public interest test or where the request is particularly complex.

4.4 In its response the University will:

- State whether it holds information of the type requested
- Communicate that information to the individual, subject to certain exemptions
- Provide the information, wherever possible, in the manner requested

4.5 Applicants requesting information that is available through the University's publication scheme will be referred to the scheme.

4.6 The University may charge a fee to cover the costs of producing and transmitting the information. The University will not charge for staff time involved in complying with a request, unless the University decides to comply voluntarily with a request that exceeds the cost limit. Any charges will be levied in accordance with the guidance issued by the Information Commissioner or the Cabinet Office. The applicant will be informed in advance of the fee, which must be paid before the information is provided.

5. Exemptions

5.1 The University will approach requests for information in a positive manner with a view to disclosing the required information. Some information is exempt from disclosure and so doesn't have to be provided. Information about exemptions is available on the Information Commissioner's website <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/refusing-a-request/> or from the University's Freedom of Information Officer. Where information requested is exempt, the University will:

- Either confirm or deny that it holds the information requested, unless to do so would reveal exempt information
- Explain why the exempt information has been withheld
- Inform the applicant of his or her right to complain to the Information Commissioner

5.2 The University is not obliged to respond to "vexatious" or repeated requests (where the University has recently responded to an identical or nearly identical request from the same person) or requests where the cost of complying is deemed excessive in accordance with guidance issued by the Office of the Information Commissioner. In the latter case, the University will seek to clarify requests so that they can be answered within the cost ceiling or will provide information up to the cost ceiling.

6. Complaints

- 6.1 Applicant dissatisfied with the University's initial response to a request for information should make a complaint in writing to the University's Freedom of Information Officer:

Sarah Martin (University Solicitor)
University for the Creative Arts
Falkner Road
Farnham
GU9 7DS

- 6.2 Complainants dissatisfied with the outcome of any complaint made through the University's own complaints procedure can appeal to the Information Commissioner:

FOI Compliance Team (complaints)
Office of the Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF