



Freedom of Information – publication scheme

Purpose & Scope

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) gives rights of public access to information held by public authorities. Section 19 of the FOIA requires every public body to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which has been approved by the Information Commissioner, and to publish information in accordance with the scheme.

To reduce duplication and bureaucracy and to ensure consistency in the release of information, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has developed a model publication for Further Education Colleges. Furness College has adopted the model publication scheme.

The information provided by Furness College under the model publication scheme is provided on the college website and follows the guidance document provided by the ICO. 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, then the College will provide the information by another means (ie by post). Information held by Furness College that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Policy Statement

COLLEGE PUBLICATION SCHEME - FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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Obtaining Further Information or Providing Feedback

It is important that this publication scheme meets your needs. If you find the scheme difficult to understand, or require further information please let us know via the contact details provided below. We also welcome suggestions as to how our scheme might be improved.

In order for a request to be treated as having been made under the Act, it must be:

- made in writing;
- state the name of the applicant and give an address for correspondence;
- describe the information which is requested and addressed to:

– Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality

Furness College

Channelside

Bessemer Way

Barrow in Furness

Cumbria

LA14 2PJ

Tel: 01229 844771

E-mail: foi@furness.ac.uk

PUBLICATION SCHEME

Introduction

This guide has been produced to meet the requirements of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Publication Scheme and definition documents provided by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for Further Education Colleges has been adopted by Furness College with effect from September 2017. The Corporation formally approved the detail and content of the scheme at its meeting on 21.9.17

1. Legal requirement

- 1.1 Adopting a publication scheme is a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act promotes greater openness and accountability across the public sector by requiring all 'public authorities' to make information available proactively, through a publication scheme.
- 1.2 Public authorities are defined in the Act and include universities, further education colleges and sixth form colleges.

2. What is a publication scheme?

- 2.1 A publication scheme is a document which describes the information a public authority publishes, or intends to publish. In this context, 'publish' means to make information available routinely. These descriptions are called 'classes of information'. The scheme is not a list of the actual publications, because this will change as new material is published or existing material revised. It is, however, the public authority's commitment to make available the information described.
- 2.2 A publication scheme must set out the classes, or categories, of information published. It must also make clear how the information described can be accessed and whether or not charges will be made.
- 2.3 Furness College has adopted the model publication scheme developed for the Further Education sector and is therefore committed to publishing the information it describes. The purpose of the model is to prevent institutions duplicating effort in producing individual schemes and to assist the public in accessing information from across the sector. However, to reflect the diversity in size and function of the institution, a number of optional classes of information are included. As a result, models within the sector will vary slightly. Any optional classes relevant to the College have been included in our scheme.

3. Who we are and what we do

- 3.1 Furness College is a further education college based in South Cumbria that has a long history of service to the local community and beyond. The College is clearly recognised by local stakeholders as a key partner in the social and economic development of our community.
- 3.2 We provide a wide range of provision. As at June 2018:
 - 1376 16-18 year olds students;
 - over 700 full-time and part-time adult students;
 - 450 full and part-time higher education students;
 - 1200 work-based learners, largely on apprenticeship programmes;
 - 500 employees of local companies on bespoke training programmes.

4. Accessing information covered by the publication scheme

- 4.1 The information colleges routinely publish falls into the following categories and these have been determined by the ICO:
 - What we are and what we do: Organisational information – structures, locations, contacts;
 - What we spend and how we spend it: - Published accounts;
 - What our priorities are and how we are doing: Strategies and plans, performance indicators,
 - Inspections and reviews;
 - How we make decisions: Decision making processes, records of decisions;
 - Our policies and procedures: Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivery of college services and responsibilities;
 - Lists and registers: Information legally required to be held in publicly available registers and logs;
 - The Services we offer: Prospectuses, leaflets, advice and guidance, newsletters.
- 4.2 Next to each class we have indicated the manner in which the information described will be available. We have also indicated whether charges apply to material in each class.

5. What about information not covered by the publication scheme?

- 5.1 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, you have the right to request any information held by a public authority which it has made available through its publication scheme.
- 5.2 Requests will have to be made in writing and, the College will have 20 working days to respond. We may charge a fee, which will have to be calculated according to Fees Regulations. You should note we will not be required to release information to which an exemption in the Act legitimately applies (examples are identified below). However, where this is the case, we will explain to you why we are not releasing the information and we accept that we may also have to justify this to the Information Commissioner.
- 5.3 Exemptions include:
- Information already available elsewhere: If this is the case, we will, where we can, direct you to where you will find the information you are looking for;
 - Information provided in confidence: You should note that certain information is supplied to use in confidence and the Act obliges us to hold these things confidentially and not to disclose them;
 - Personal information: This is covered by the Data Protection Act and is only available to the individual concerned;
 - Investigations and proceedings: If an investigation is ongoing it is unlikely that we will be able to let you have information until all proceedings are finalised;
 - Information intended for future publications: If we intend to publish the information you want, you may have to wait until it is published before you can have access to it.
 - Information that the Principal of the College decides is not in the public interest to disclose.

6. Our policy on charging for information

- 6.1 Much of our information is available to you free of charge. However, because of the costs involved in locating or copying what you need, Furness College retains the right granted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to charge fees where necessary and these will be in accordance with the Act and any other relevant legislation. Where compilation of data is in our view particularly onerous it will be our intention to charge an additional sum of £25 per person hour to cover locating documents, copying and postage (up to a maximum of £450 as defined within the Act).

7. Further information

- 7.1 If we are unable to resolve any complaint, you can complain to the Information Commissioner, the independent body who oversees the Freedom of Information Act. More information about the Freedom of Information Act is available on the Information Commissioner's website, see below.
- Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
WILMSLOW
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545700
E-mail: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk
Website at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

This scheme has been reviewed regarding the requirement for an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and a Privacy Impact Assessment.

At this stage it is felt that a full impact or privacy assessment is unnecessary as the college public duty has been discharged through a related policy/procedure or there is no current requirement.

Document Control		Linked Policies/Strategies	Linked Procedures
Policy	Publication Scheme – Freedom of Information	Data Protection Policy	
Responsibility	Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality		
Approval Date	October 2019		
Review Date	October 2021		
Approval Group	Quality	SLT	Board