

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FoI) PROCEDURE



Review and Approval				
Author/Owner	Position	Approved by	Approval date	Review date
Emma Cox	VP F&R	Signed: <i>EMC</i>	March 23	5 Years

Document Control – Revision History					
Author/Owner	Summary of Changes	Date	Date last reviewed by SED	Version	Recommend to SED Y/N
Emma Cox	New Procedure	7/2/23		v1	

Initial Equality Impact Screening	
<b>Has anyone else been consulted on this procedure?</b> Yes, Sam Paterson	
<b>What evidence has been used for this impact screening (e.g. related policies, publications)?</b>	
<b>Declaration (please tick one statement and indicate any negative impacts)</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I am satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this Procedure and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. There are no specific negative impacts on any of the Protected Characteristics groups.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I recommend that an Equality Impact Assessment is required by the Equality and Diversity group, as possible negative impacts have been identified for one or more of the Protected Characteristics groups as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Age</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Disability</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Race</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sex</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Marriage &amp; civil partnership</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy &amp; maternity</li> </ul>
<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Position:</b>
Reviewed by Equality & Diversity Group: NO	If Yes: Date:
I confirm that any recommended amendments have been made	
<b>Summary of Comments including Recommendations from Equality &amp; Diversity Group Review:</b>	
1. Pronouns changed to their instead of he/her.	
<b>Amended by Author:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## **1. HOW DO I RECOGNISE A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUEST?**

1.1 A request for information must:

- be made in writing (includes email or any other legible format capable of being used for subsequent reference). If you receive something that appears to be an FoI request orally (e.g. by telephone) you should point out that it has to be made in writing before it can be treated as a formal request
- state the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence (either email or postal address will do)
- describe the information requested

1.2 A request for information can be made by any individual or body, anywhere in the world. It is irrelevant whether or not the request mentions Freedom of Information itself. A request which makes no reference to the Act may still have to be treated as an FoI request. On the other hand, even if a request does cite the Act, it may be cited incorrectly and fall under another access regime (i.e. the Data Protection Act or the Environmental Information Regulations). Thus, the onus is on us to correctly identify a request as an FoI request and act accordingly.

## **2. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I RECEIVE AN FoI REQUEST?**

- 2.1 Most requests are sent by email direct to the Principal, however if you think you have received a request whether it be via email or post, please forward this immediately to the FoI email address ([foi@yeovil.ac.uk](mailto:foi@yeovil.ac.uk)) where the request will be dealt with within the stipulated 20 working days by the PA to the Vice Principal Finance & Resources.
- 2.2 If you receive an FoI request in hard copy form, please date the request, this is important at all times of the year but especially so during half terms. The College has 20 working days in which to provide information that is requested, and the clock starts ticking from the day after the request is received (unless clarification of the request is required). The request should then be scanned and emailed to the FoI email address. If you receive a request in an email this should be forwarded immediately to the FoI email address.
- 2.3 The PA to the Vice Principal Finance & Resources will then input details of the request into the tracking database and determine what action needs to be taken in order to respond to the request and will inform a senior manager of staff where appropriate.
- 2.4 The relevant Assistant Principal/Manager will then be informed of the request, and they will be asked to collate any relevant information held.
- 2.5 It is important that information covered by the request is found and sent to the FoI email address as soon as possible along with any concerns relating to its disclosure so that we are able to determine whether or not an exemption might apply.

## **3. WHERE SHOULD I LOOK FOR THE INFORMATION REQUESTED?**

3.1 If you have been asked to locate information for a request you should:

- identify and retrieve all records which are relevant to the request (this includes checking office files lists, shared drives, e-mail and so forth)
- consider whether any other office(s) may hold records relevant to the request
- contact other offices as appropriate

## **4. HOW IS THE DECISION ABOUT WHAT INFORMATION TO RELEASE IN RESPONSE TO AN FoI REQUEST TAKEN?**

4.1 The PA to the Vice Principal Finance & Resources will:

- consider whether any exemptions apply and if so whether legal advice is required
- consider whether the information coming within the scope of the request contains third party information and whether third parties need to be consulted and/or informed of the request and intended response
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- inform senior management, where necessary

## **5. HOW DO WE NOTIFY THE APPLICANT OF THE DECISION TAKEN REGARDING THEIR FOI REQUEST?**

5.1 If a decision has been taken to grant the request (in full), the PA to the Vice Principal Finance & Resources will assemble and release the relevant information requested, and include a covering letter or email to the applicant advising of:

- the decision
- how they will be given access to the information requested
- their right to an internal review of the handling of their request.

5.2 The PA to the Vice Principal Finance & Resources will then:

- record the decision and final outcome on the tracking database
- file a copy of the outgoing letter and copy of the information sent

5.3 If the request is refused (in whole or part), the PA to the Vice Principal Finance & Resources will assemble and release any information which is not refused, and also write a letter to the applicant advising them of:

- the decision
- the reason(s) for refusal
- any exemptions applicable, stating clearly why they apply
- the application of the public interest test (where appropriate)
- their right to an internal review of the decision.

5.4 The PA to the Vice Principal Finance & Resources will then record the decision and final outcome on the Tracking System.

## **6. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS**

6.1 Freedom of Information Act 2000 [What is the Freedom of Information Act? | ICO](#)

6.2 FoI Publication Scheme January 2023