

Full name of policy:	Freedom of Information Policy
Requirement for policy:	The College's response to the requirement under the Freedom of Information Act for publicly funded organisations to document, and make available, a publication scheme on the College website.
Name and post of person responsible:	Tim Hulme Executive Director of Resources & Organisational Development
Highest College body approving the policy:	Board of Governors
Date of approval:	
Frequency of review:	Bi-annually or as required by changes in legislation
Dates of previous reviews:	June 2019
Date of next formal review:	June 2021
Equality Impact Screening:	
Equality Impact Assessment: (If required)	Not required
Policy Reference:	
Total number of pages: (Including appendices and front sheet)	9
Comments:	This policy should be read in conjunction with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Network Services Regulations (Various documents); ii) Safeguarding Policies (Adults at Risk and Young Persons). iii) GDPR Policy

East Sussex College Group Freedom of Information Policy

1. Legal requirement

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. 'Public authorities' are defined in the Act and include Universities, further education colleges and sixth form colleges.

2. What is a Publication Scheme?

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.

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.

3. The 'Model' Publication Scheme for Higher Education/Further Education

East Sussex College Group has adopted the model publication scheme developed for the Further Education sector and is therefore committed to publishing the information it describes. This model is designed for further education colleges across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the model is to save 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 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 us have been included in our scheme.

4. Accessing information covered by the Publication Scheme

The classes of information we publish are described in the second part of the scheme. 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. To request information available through our publication scheme, please contact:

Executive Director, Resources & Organisational Development
East Sussex College Group
Cross Levels Way
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 2UF

Email: Tim.Hulme@sussexdowns.ac.uk
Telephone: 030 300 38501

For further information, please contact -

Tim Hulme, Executive Director, Resources & Organisational Development
Email: Tim.Hulme@sussexdowns.ac.uk
Telephone: 030 300 38501

Nicola Woodcock – Executive Assistant
Email: Nicola.Woodcock@sussexdowns.ac.uk
Telephone: 030 300 39689

Please note that a publication scheme relates to 'published' information. Therefore, material covered has already been prepared in a format ready for distribution.

5. What about information not covered by the Publication Scheme?

From 1 January 2005 you will have the right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request any information, held by a public authority, which has not already been made available through its publication scheme.

Requests for information which is not covered by the publication scheme must be made in writing to:

Tim Hulme
Executive Director, Resources & Organisational Development
East Sussex College Group
Cross Levels Way
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 2UF

A response will normally be made within 20 working days and a fee may be charged which will be calculated in accordance with the Fees regulations. However, information will not be required to be released where an exemption from the Act legitimately applies.

However, public authorities may be required to explain to the applicant why they are not releasing information and they may also have to justify this to the Information Commissioner.

6. Procedure for complaints relating to supply of information

Persons wishing to make a complaint or comment regarding provision of information under the Freedom of Information Act should address their comments in writing, to:

Tim Hulme / Nicola Woodcock
East Sussex College Group
Cross Levels Way
Eastbourne
BN21 2UF

Email: Tim.Hulme@sussexdowns.ac.uk

Email: Nicola.Woodcock@sussexdowns.ac.uk

Wherever the College has refused to supply information requested under the Freedom of Information Act, the applicant has the right to complain to the Information Commissioner who may be contacted as follows:

By letter:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

By email:
<https://ico.org.uk/>
 0303 123 1113

Further Information

More information about the Freedom of Information Act is available on the Information Commissioner's website at: <https://ico.org.uk/>

East Sussex College Group Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme

Governance

Introduction

This section covers information relating to the way the institution is governed and how decisions are made. It includes information on the legal status of the institution, which member of staff or group within the organisation is responsible for specific functions and where they fit in the overall structure of the organisation. In some instances information from committee minutes will be exempt from disclosure where it contains personal information; information that may damage the commercial interests of the institution or that may threaten the health and safety of specific individuals.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Legal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Act 2011* • Further and Higher Education Act 1992* • Charities Act 2011* • Learning and Skills Act 2000* <p>*The actual legislation is already publicly available</p>	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Sussex College Group Instruments and Articles of Government 	College website	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Memorandum 99/38 • Audit Code of Practice 	http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/	No
How is the institution organised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational structure charts 	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Information on the institutional context	Mission statement	College website	No
	Strategic Objectives	College website	No
	Annual report/accounts	College website	No
	Quality Assurance and Improvement policy	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Management structure	College's Corporation Membership	College website	No
	Code of Conduct for Corporation Members	College website	No
	Standing Orders	College website	No
	Governors' induction/training policy	College website	No
	Description of sub-structures and committees including terms of reference and	College website	No

	membership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporation • Search and Governance • Audit • Finance • Remuneration • Curriculum and Standards • Human Resources 		
	Minutes and papers of Corporation and Committee meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas and minutes • Reports and papers 	College website	No
	Appointment Committees and procedures	College website	No

Financial Resources

Introduction

This section covers information on the institution's strategy and management of financial resources. The Finance Department provides accounting, procurement and contracting services, helping to make best use of resources and fulfilling statutory responsibilities. Information that may damage the institution's commercial interests will be excluded from this publication.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Finance	Remuneration of senior post holders as published in annual accounts	College website	No
Resource Planning	Financial regulations including Procurement policy	Electronic Paper	No Yes
	Annual accounts	College website	No
	Corporate plan/vision	College website	No
	Annual report	College website	

Human Resources

Introduction

This section covers information on the institution's strategy and management of human resources, rather than information relating to individual members of staff which is exempt from disclosure as personal information. The information available covers personnel policies and procedures (including terms and conditions of service including all current versions of the information specified in each class).

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Employment and employee relations	• Induction Policy	Electronic	No
	• Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy	College website (for certain documents)	No
	• Generic terms and conditions of employment	Paper	Yes
	• Staffing structure		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation charts • Salary scales • Grievance Procedure • Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedures • Staff Capability Policy • Anti-Harassment and Bullying (Dignity at Work) Policy • Health Safety and Welfare Policy • Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle blowing) Policy and Procedure • Work-Life Balance Directory 		
Equality opportunities and Diversity	Equality & Diversity Policy	College website	No
Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction Policy • Probation and Appointment Support Policy • Appraisal procedure • CPD Guidelines • Staff Training and Development Policy 	Electronic Paper	No Yes

Physical Resources

Introduction

Institutions are often substantial land and property owners in their own right. Classes in this section cover information at a strategic level relating to the institution's management of its physical resources. Information that provides specific details of the institution's future plans to alter its estate may be exempt from disclosure where such disclosure would damage the institution's commercial interests.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Estates	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation Strategy • Location map and site addresses • Site plans • Procurement Policy • Catering Services • Planned Maintenance Programme • Environmental Policy • Health and Safety Procedures for Hiring and Managing 	<p>Electronic College website (for certain documents) Paper</p>	<p>No No Yes</p>

	Contractors		
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Student Administration and Support

Introduction

This section contains information on how the institution manages the administration and progression of their students from admission to course completion, including student support services. Information within this section does not include specific student personal details, by virtue of being personal information.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Information on student admission, progression and completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of student entrants classified by age, gender, ethnicity and disability Student progression, retention and completion data Data on qualifications awarded to students 	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Student admission and enrolment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission procedures Examination Policy 	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Student discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and Behaviour Policy Complaints Policy Student Assessment Malpractice Policy 	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Student learning support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Handbook Discretionary Learner Support Fund Policy 	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Student liaison	Student Council Minutes	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Student policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-Bullying Policy Young Person's Safeguarding Policy Religion and Belief Policy Statement No Smoking Policy 	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Student welfare	Information and Guidance Strategy	Electronic Paper	No Yes
	Student Services Information	College website	No
Student associations and activities	Student Union constitution, code of practice and list of officers	Electronic Paper	No Yes

Information Services

Introduction

This section covers those functions within the institution that provide access to information to the student body and both academic and administrative staff. These include libraries, computing services and information support services.

Such functions may be managed separately from each other, or in various combinations. These services routinely explain their facilities (and the conditions of their use) to students, staff and the general public, and it is information of this nature that is included within this section.

Information services inevitably hold large quantities of personal data that are exempt from general disclosure.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Availability and conditions of use of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acceptable Use Policy for Institutional IT Facilities and Systems• Email Policy• Internet Acceptable Use Policy• Social Networking Policy	College website	No
Mission statements and related documents	Service Standards	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Policies with regard to data and information	Data Protection Policy	Electronic Paper	No Yes

Teaching and Learning

Introduction

This section contains information regarding the management of teaching and learning within the institution including the mechanisms for reviewing and ensuring the quality of teaching provided. (Institutions may be required to make available much of the information included within this section as part of the recommendations of the *Information on quality and standards in higher education (Cooke report)*).

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Academic year dates	College calendar	College website	No
Further course information	Prospectus	College website	No
	Course information (Learner Portal)	College website	No

Information on internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards	Annual self-assessment report	College website	No
	Inspection report(s)	Ofsted website	No
	Quality Assurance and Improvement Policy	Electronic Paper	No Yes
	Complaints Policy and Procedure	College website	No
Study assessment strategy	Examination Policy	Electronic Paper	No Yes
	Assessment Policy	Electronic Paper	No Yes
	Internal Assessment and Appeals Policy and Procedure	Electronic Paper	No Yes
Tuition fees	Tuition Fee Policy	Electronic Paper	No Yes
	Course information (Learner Portal)	College website	No

External Relations

Introduction

This section covers information relating to the institution's relationship with its external environment. These include formal reports the institution is required to provide to its funding bodies, arrangements with other institutions, how it manages its relationship with the local community and how it retains contact with its former staff and students.

By virtue of its nature most institutions will probably find that the majority of these classes are already made available to the public by some means. Members of the public are also likely to find the same or related information is available from external partners with which the institution has links.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Government and Regulator regulations	Annual Report	College website	No
	Self-Assessment Report	College website	No
	Inspection report(s)	Ofsted website	No
Marketing and recruitment	Prospectus	College website	No
	Open days	College website	No
	Course information (Learner Portal)	College website	No
Public relations	News and Events	College website	No
	Prospectus	College website	No
	Course information (Learner Portal)	College website	No
	Student handbook	College website	No