



East Durham College

Policy Document

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Document Control

This document is issued and controlled by Quality Team and may only be modified by the designated group after proposed modifications have been accepted by the College Management Group

The latest version of the procedure will be maintained on the College Extranet

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Freedom of Information



Scope

All members of the public wishing to access information under the Publication Scheme as determined by The Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Purpose

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires all Higher and Further Education establishments to adopt and maintain a 'Publication Scheme'. The purpose of the Act is to promote greater openness and accountability and will give everyone the right of access to all information held, subject to some exemptions, by all educational establishments and public authorities.

Comment

Information held under the Data Protection Act 1998 is outside the scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Policy Statement

The College is placed under a duty to publish information held proactively, through the adoption of a publication scheme and by publishing information in accordance with those schemes.

Publication Scheme

The Publication Scheme is a guide to the types of information the College undertakes to make available to the public as a matter of routine. As well as describing the types of information, the scheme also indicates whether a charge is to be made for any types of information and also the form in which information is published (e.g. website or in paper form).

The College Scheme

The College has opted to adopt the 'Model Publication Scheme (MPS) for Further Education (FE) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland'.

There are eight main groups of classes of information in the model publication scheme:

- Governance
- Financial Resources
- Human Resources
- Physical Resources
- Student Administration and Support

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- Information Services
- Teaching and Learning
- External Relation

For further details refer to Appendix A.

Responsibility for the Scheme

The College Principal is the nominated Officer for the College.

Freedom of Information for Internal Use

Members of staff receiving a request under the Publication Scheme should refer it to the Principal for the process to be triggered.

Freedom of Information for External Use

The College address is as follows:

East Durham College
Willerby Grove Campus
Willerby Grove
Peterlee
Co. Durham
SR8 2RN

Telephone: (0191) 5182000

Fax: (0191) 5185555

Website: www.eastdurham.ac.uk

The College will provide advice and assistance as far as it would be reasonable to expect the College to do so.

The Publication Scheme will be made available on our website and hard copies kept at all of our Learner Resource Centres. This Publication Scheme and the documents to which it refers are available in English, though other languages can be requested.

We will aim to respond in relation to specific requests for information within 20 working days.

Each request will be treated on its own merits and a time estimate will be given by which we expect to respond.

In certain circumstances it may not be possible to deal with an application in full within 20 working days.

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Refusal of Requests

Where the College intends to refuse requests for information under the Publication Scheme, notification and explanation of reason will be given to applicants.

Complaints – External Use

Complaints will be dealt with through the College Complaints Procedures. This may be used by any person who considers that the College is not complying with the Publication Scheme. In order to access the College's Complaints Procedure, you should contact any College Reception to supply the appropriate literature.

If the complaint is not fully resolved this will be escalated to the Clerk to the Corporation and a response provided accordingly.

The opportunity to complain to the College does not limit any rights people have to complain to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: (01625) 545700
Fax: (01625) 524510
Email: mail@dataprotection.gov.uk
Website: www.dataprotection.gov.uk

Exemptions

A number of exemptions in relation to supplying information requested under the Freedom of Information Act are in place which includes:

- Information accessible to applicant by other means
- Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters
- Personal Information
- Information provided in confidence
- Legal Professional Privilege
- Prohibitions on Disclosure
- Commercial Interests

Further information and guidance on exemptions will be given against each request as appropriate.

Information Availability

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Information not already available through the Publication Scheme may be accessible through specific requests. In this regard the Freedom of Information Act establishes the following rights:

- The right to be told whether the information exists
- The right to receive the information subject to exemptions

Charges

Requests for multiple print outs or for copies of documents not available on the College website, will attract a charge for the cost of retrieval, postage, photocopying etc. This charge will be payable in advance and the charges incurred will be confirmed upon receipt of the request.

Supporting Documents and Records

- Appendix A – main groups of classes of information
- Publication Scheme Procedure 6.2.1

Please feed back to the Quality Team any constructive suggestions on how any aspect of the procedure may be clarified or improved