

Freedom of Information – guide for making requests

What is Freedom of Information

Freedom of information is the right to request information from a public authority. The term 'public authorities' includes universities. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) are the two pieces of legislation that cover requests for general and environmental information respectively. The Data Protection Act (DPA) covers requests for an individual's own personal information and informs how requests for other personal information should be handled under the FOIA and EIR.

How the School will handle your request

The School will respond to written requests for information held by the School within twenty working days of receiving the request.

We are required to contact you if we require further information on identifying information you have requested or if your request is too broad and needs to be refined. Please note that while a request can look straightforward, the School creates and keeps information for its needs, which may not quite match the information you have requested. We will let you know if what we keep is similar to but not quite what you have requested and give you the chance of accepting the information we hold.

We may need to contact you if producing information for your request will have photocopying or similar costs.

We will contact you if information can be found from another organisation subject to the FOIA and/or EIR.

We will also contact you if it will take longer than 20 working days to make a decision on the public interest regarding whether information should be released or is exempt from release.

Making a Freedom of Information request

If you are sending a request via email, please send it to the Information Compliance team at one of the contacts listed below. While you can send a request to anyone at the School, this will ensure that your request is processed properly.

While you are entitled to make an Environmental Information Regulations request verbally, we ask that you make such requests in writing to avoid confusion as to what is being asked for. If you are unable to do so, we will write down your verbal request and send it to you for checking before processing.

The School has a lot of information on the website: www.lse.ac.uk. As required by the FOI Act, we also have a publication scheme: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/legalAndCompliance/FOI/newPublicationScheme/home.aspx>. You can also find data on the HE sector as a whole via the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), UCAS and other external organisations. A good round up of these organisations can be found here: <http://helpmeinvestigate.com/education/2013/02/data-sources-for-higher-education-part-1/>. It's worth checking these sources before you make a request as the information you want may already be available.

The response

The School's response will include:

- the information you have requested and any explanation needed to interpret the information if it is unclear UNLESS
- The information is exempt OR will breach the cost limit to produce OR the request is considered vexatious.

In these cases, you will be told the reason, including the section under which that the information is being exempted/excepted and the request refused. An explanation of how the public interest test or prejudice (harm) tests were carried out will also be included where necessary. We may be able to provide partial information in some cases and will endeavour to do so.

- Contact information for internal reviews and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), who oversee the FoIA and EIR.

Requesting an internal review

If you believe that the response you have received does not meet your request, you can request an internal review. The review will be handled by a member of the Information Compliance team that did not originally process your request. As with the requests, we will aim to provide a response to a request for internal review within 20 working days.

Please note that while you can complain directly to the ICO, they do expect that an internal review will be carried out first.

Complaints to the Information Commissioner's Office

If you are still not happy with the response after the internal review, you may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. The details can be found on their website:

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/>.

Contacts

The Information Compliance team is:

Rachael Maguire, ext 4622, email r.e.maguire@lse.ac.uk

Joint email glpd.info.rights@lse.ac.uk

You can also contact Kevin Haynes, Head of Legal and Compliance, ext 7823, email k.j.haynes@lse.ac.uk