



Freedom of Information Policy

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.

3. The 'Model' Publication Scheme for Further Education

- 3.1 Petroc has adopted the model publication scheme developed for the Further Education sector and is therefore committed to publishing the information it describes.
- 3.2 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 functions of institutions, 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.

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- 3.3 To assist with the development of the model, a number of institutions across the sector volunteered as pilots. Information about the pilot exercise is available from the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) website at: www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mps_overview

4. Who We Are

- 4.1 Petroc is a tertiary college providing education and training at further and higher education levels for the community of North Devon, and beyond.
- 4.2 We work closely with local schools, training providers, businesses, voluntary and community groups, The University of Plymouth, the local authorities and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.. We also work with Sub Contractors and Project partners, delivering training locally and in the South West region.
- 4.3 Links with other publication schemes would include those of the Education Skills Funding Agency, the Department for Education and Skills and the Association of Colleges.

5. Accessing Information Covered by the Publication Scheme

- 5.1 The classes of information we publish are described in the second part of the scheme.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 To request information available through our publication scheme, please contact: **The Guidance Centre, Petroc, Old Sticklepath Hill, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 2BQ. (Tel 01271 338125, Fax 01271 338121, E-mail guidancecentre@ndevon.ac.uk)**
- 5.4 Please note that a publication scheme relates to 'published' information. Therefore, material covered has already been prepared in a format ready for distribution.

6. What about Information not Covered by the Publication Scheme?

- 6.1 You have the right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request any information held by a public authority which it has not already made available through its publication scheme.

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6.2 Requests will have to be made in writing and, in general, public authorities will have 20 working days to respond. They may charge a fee, which will have to be calculated according to Fees Regulations. They will not be required to release information to which an exemption in 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.

7. Feedback

7.1 It is important that this publication scheme meets your needs. If you find the scheme difficult to understand, please let us know. We also welcome suggestions as to how our scheme might be improved. Any questions, comments or complaints about this scheme should be sent in writing to the Publication Scheme Co-ordinator:
**The Governance Advisor, Petroc, Old Sticklepath Hill,
Barnstaple, Devon EX31 2BQ**

7.2 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:
**Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane,
Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF**

8. Further information

More information about the Freedom of Information Act is available on the Information Commissioner's website at:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

www.scotland.gov.uk/government/foi

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Freedom of Information Act 2000



Information Commissioner

Model Publication Scheme (MPS) for Further Education (FE) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Main categories

These eight main groups (and the classes within them) form the MPS. They are in a logical order and no one single section has a higher status than another. **The types of information and documents listed within the classes are examples only and not mandatory.** The purpose of the examples is to indicate the type of information that should be made available, if held, via the MPS.

Some classes are 'Optional', that is an institution need not include these classes in their Publication Scheme (PS) but may still sign up to the MPS. All other classes are 'Core' and are compulsory. For further details see the Information Commissioners 'Explanatory Note', particularly sections 3.2 and 3.3.

The MPS has been drawn in such a way as to exclude classes of information that are exempt under the Freedom of Information Act or for which exemptions could be claimed. However, it is recognised that individual items of information or documents or parts thereof in a class may be exempt and these can be omitted if they are exempt, **provided** in all cases the institution makes clear what has been omitted and why. Personal data and information, which affect the commercial operations of an institution, are two examples.

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

1. GOVERNANCE
2. FINANCIAL RESOURCES
3. HUMAN RESOURCES
4. PHYSICAL RESOURCES
5. STUDENT ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT
6. INFORMATION SERVICES
7. TEACHING AND LEARNING
8. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The columns used in this MPS are shown below:

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Examples of the type of information that fit in this class	A brief description to aid the public in understanding what the type of information is.	The media in which the information is to be provided, i.e. paper or electronically (via the Internet or email)	Whether there is a charge for any of the information within each class

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1. 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 individual 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
1.1	Legal framework	<p>This class contains information relating to how the institution was established and its standing from the point of view of the law. Ultimately the corporate status of some FE 'corporations' will be conferred by the relevant statutes, in particular the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The actual legislation is often already publicly available, for example on the HMSO website (www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts.htm) and need not to be duplicated,.</p> <p>Every educational institution (University, Further or Higher Education College) has a legal basis, which forms its legal status. This legal status can have been obtained in a variety of ways such as by Instruments and Articles of Government, Charter or an Act of Parliament.</p>	Electronically	Free
1.2	How the institution is organised	<p>This class contains information relating to how the individual units of the institution are organised and where each unit fits in the overall structure of the institution. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational structure charts • Description of work/responsibilities of units 	Electronically	Free
1.3	Information on the institutional context	<p>This class should include information to be made available by FE corporations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FE corporation's mission statement • Relevant sections of the FE corporation's corporate plan • Statement of the FE corporation's quality assurance policies and procedures • The FE corporation's learning and teaching strategy and periodic reviews of progress 	Electronically	Free

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1.4	Management structure	<p>This class contains information relating to how the institution's management structure is organised and the function and purpose of each part of the management structure. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of Statutory Bodies (e.g. Governing Body, Corporation). In many cases it will be appropriate to list the names of people who are members of the above, as they are matters of public interest • Codes of Conduct for members of governing bodies • Description of the sub-structures and committees supporting them. This may include Academic Boards, Boards of Governors and Steering Groups These may have 'Standing Orders' that indicate the mode of operation • Objectives on which the structure is based • Terms of reference, membership and mode of operation of all boards and committees in the formal structure • Code of practice for college elections and committee procedures • Minutes and papers of Governing Body, Corporation meetings and Steering Groups etc • Appointment committees and procedures 	Electronically	Free
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2. Financial Resources

Introduction

This section covers information on the institution's strategy and management of financial resources. The Finance Division 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 publication.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
2.1	Finance	Examples of the type of information in this class include policies and procedures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets and accounts • Contracting • Goods and services • Insurance • Pensions • Remuneration of senior staff as published in annual accounts • Travel and subsistence 	Electronically	Free
2.2	Resource planning	This class should include information that defines how the college undertakes its planning and resource allocation, how it regulates the deployment of resources and how it publishes the outcomes. Examples of the type of information include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial regulations, including procurement policy • Annual accounts • Annual budget (as appears in the final accounts) • Planning and budgeting procedures • Corporate plan/Mission statement • Annual report 	Electronically	Free

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3. 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
3.1	Employment and employee relations	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to recruitment • Generic terms and conditions of employment • Salary grades • Collective bargaining procedures and consultation with recognised trade unions and professional organisations, and agreements reached • Grievance procedures and policies • Disciplinary procedures and policies • Harassment and bullying policy • Health and safety policy and procedures • Public interest disclosure (for compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act) • Job vacancies • Any other policies relating to staff not included elsewhere in the PS 	Electronically	Free
3.2	Equal opportunities /Diversity	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to the provision of equal opportunities with respect to age, race/ethnic origin, gender, religion and belief, sexual orientation, and disability • Race Relations/Race Equality Policies, as required under the Race Relations Amendment Act of 2000 	Electronically	Free

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3.3	Staff development	<p>This class should include information on staff development and training, including induction programmes, probation and appraisal. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction – details of areas covered and procedures • Policies and procedures relating to probation • Policies and procedures pertaining to appraisal • Policies and procedures relating to the on-going development of staff, including schemes such as Investors in People • Policies on upgrades and promotions 	Electronically	Free
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4. 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 (e.g. proposals to purchase additional property) may be exempt from disclosure where such disclosure would damage the institution's commercial interests.¹

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
4.1	Estates	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estates strategy and plan • Tendering policies • Catering policies • Cleaning policies • Grounds maintenance and upkeep • Building maintenance and upkeep • Recycling policies • Disposal policies • Map of main site • Address of main site and any other locations 	Electronically	Free

¹ The types of information and documents listed in the classes are examples only and not mandatory, e.g. 'Cleaning policies'. The purpose of the examples is to indicate the type of information that should be made available, if held, via the MPS.

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5. 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 available within this section does not include specific student personal details, by virtue of being personal information.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
5.1	Information on student admission, progression and completion	This class should include information recommended to be made available by the Cooke report under this heading (as above) ² : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student qualifications on entry • The range of student entrants classified by age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability and geographical origin as returned to LSC • Student progression, retention and completion data • Data on qualifications awarded to students • Data on employment/training outcomes for graduates/students 	Electronically	Free
5.2	Student accommodation	This class should include information relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation services 	Electronically	Free
5.3	Student administration	This class should include information relating to all areas of the maintenance of individual student records, including policies and procedures covering the management of the student records system itself, and the division of responsibilities between central registry staff, school/faculty/college staff and the students themselves. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registry student records policies and procedures documents • Registry security and data protection policy and procedure documents 	Electronically	Free

² Where applicable for colleges who carry out HE work. *Information on quality and standards in higher education: Final report of the Task Group*, HEFCE 02/15 March Report, 2002 (Cooke report).

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5.4	Student admission and enrolment	This class should include information relating to the admission/enrolment of new students, including policies and procedures covering the assessment of external qualifications, the creation of student records, the coordination of student funding arrangements and the division of responsibilities between central admissions or equivalent and college/school/faculty staff. An example of the type of information in this class is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions and enrolment policies and procedures documents 	Electronically	Free
5.5	Student discipline	This class should include information relating to the conduct of disciplinary proceedings against students. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of student discipline and other policy and procedure documents • Internal student complaint and appeals procedures 	Electronically	Free
5.6	Student learning support services	This class should include information on student support services from an academic and learning perspective, particularly those not covered under Information Services. This will also likely appear in the Student Handbook and Prospectus in some form. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning development and support • Personal development advice • Services for students with special needs 	Electronically	Free
5.7	Student liaison	This class should include information relating to the structure and functioning of staff/student consultative committees or other liaison groups. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference of staff/student liaison committee(s) • Minutes of previous staff/student liaison committee(s) meetings 	Electronically	Free
5.8	Student policies	This class should include a guide to all student policies issued by the institution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies relating to students not included elsewhere in the PS • Reference to student policies included elsewhere in the PS 	Electronically	Free

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5.9	Student welfare	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare/advice services • Health services • Careers services • Sports and recreational facilities • Housing • Finance 	Electronically	Free
5.10	Student Associations and Activities	<p>This class should contain information relating to the operation and activities of the Students' Union and other clubs, associations and non-academic activities that are organised for or by the students. Examples of information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' Union Constitution, Code of Practice, List of Officers and any other related documents 	Electronically	Free

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6. 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
6.1	Availability and conditions of use of facilities	<p>Information in these classes provides details about who can access systems and services and the facilities that they can access. They also provide assurance for external bodies/individuals that rules exist to ensure that breaches of conditions of use (e.g. breach of copyright, email spamming of an external site) are appropriately dealt with.</p> <p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening hours of libraries, helpdesks etc, scheduled maintenance times of systems • Who is allowed to use the facilities (for example, categories of persons and their associated rights/levels of access) • The general rules and conditions of use (e.g. no smoking/drinking/eating, the existence of policies with regard to law such as copyright, computing code of practice, data protection). For other student policies, see reference to other relevant student policies in PS • Some of the information may be covered in the student registration details or staff conditions of employment, but it will be necessary to advise how other categories are accepted as users, e.g. temporary staff, short courses or conference use, 'taster session' etc • There should be a pointer to other codes of conduct or rules external to the institution which may apply to the user (e.g. JANET acceptable rules, Athens registration rules) • Access to/use of archives, including how far back in time information 	Electronically	Free

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		exists and if so to what extent it is available ³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of logging, monitoring and procedures followed in case of breach of conditions of use should also be included here 		
6.2	Mission statements and related documents	This class should include information regarding the aims of the department in context of its place in the organisation, a definition of the service provided and, where appropriate, service level agreements.	Electronically	Free
6.3	Policies with regard to data and information	Information in this class offers assurances to data subjects, whether they are individuals or companies that deal with the institution, that data relating to them is being handled well, minimising the risk of unauthorised access or disclosure. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security policies (i.e. how the data is protected). It could be argued that provision of information on this could risk a crime being committed, so it might be exempt or certain parts would not be published. (This is only really an issue where the security policy is explicit enough to include detailed description of implementation. Clearly disclosure of this sort of information could potentially lead to a crime under the Computer Misuse Act) • Data retention and archive policies (how long it is kept for, what happens to it after the need for it has passed, anonymising data to keep for statistics) • Data protection statements/policies • Policies on CCTV monitoring, RIPA etc 	Electronically	Free
6.4	Procurement and disposal policies	Information in this class offers assurances that monies are being appropriately spent and assurances that procurement is fair and open. The disposal policies also assure that the institution is making correct and appropriate use of funds. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies relating to the procurement and disposal of equipment • Collection management/preservation strategy (including policy on disposal of stock) 	Electronically	Free

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6.5	Scope of collections held	Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides to collections • Scope and availability of catalogues 	Electronically	Free
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7. Teaching and Learning

Introduction

This section contains information regarding the management of teaching and learning within the institution including 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') see above.)

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
7.1	Academic year dates	This class should include information on the dates for the current academic year as well as future academic years (as far as is known).	Electronically	Free
7.2	Further course information	This class should include information relating to particular schools and departments, also information relating to programmes and qualifications. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term dates • Structure of courses • Qualification gained • Changing courses • Work experience 	Electronically	Free
7.3	Information on internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards	This class should include information about the institution's internal quality audit programmes and annual review. It should also include information on the FE college's internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards. Examples of the type of information in this class include:	Electronically	Free

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	<p>a) Information on programme approval, monitoring and review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme specifications • Annual monitoring and review processes • Accreditation and monitoring reports by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies <p>b) Information on assessment procedures and outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment strategies, processes and procedures • The range and nature of student work <p>c) Information on student satisfaction with their college experience, covering the views of students on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for academic and tutorial guidance, support and supervision • Library services and IT support • Suitability of accommodation, equipment and facilities for teaching and learning • Perceptions of the quality of teaching and the range of teaching and learning methods • Assessment arrangements • Quality of pastoral support <p>d) Information and evidence available to teams undertaking internal reviews of quality and standards in relation to: The effectiveness of teaching and learning, in relation to programme aims and curriculum content as they evolve over time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of teaching methods used • The availability and use of specialist equipment and other resources and materials to support teaching and learning • Staff access to professional development to improve teaching performance, including peer observation and mentoring programmes • The use of external benchmarking and other comparators 		
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7.4	Staffing structure of schools/ departments	This class should include information about staff roles within schools and departments, together with organisational charts. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job titles of academic staff and support staff • Contact details for each school/department 	Electronically	Free
7.5	Student assessment strategy	This class should include information on the regulations and/or policy governing student assessment. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination periods • Examination regulations • Appeal procedures • Policy on plagiarism • External examination bodies 	Electronically	Free
7.6	Tuition fees	This class should include information relating to tuition fees for UK students, EU students and other international students, including information on when tuition fees will be payable and how to pay. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for home/EU students • Information for international students • Information on other charges 	Electronically	Free

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8. External Relations

Introduction

This section covers information relating to the institution's relationship with its external environment. These include the formal reports the institution is required to provide to its funding bodies³, 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 in some means. Members of the public are also likely to find the same or related information is available from the external partners with which the institution has links.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
8.1	Government and Regulator relations	This class relates to the information that the institution is legally obliged to make available to its funding and/or monitoring bodies ⁴ . Such material may provide information as to how well the institution is performing. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports/returns to funding councils, inspectorates, standards bodies, research councils, professional bodies, government departments etc • OFSTED Inspections (for FE), Teaching Quality Assessment and Research Assessment Exercise Policies (see also Teaching and Learning) 	Electronically	Free
8.2	Marketing and recruitment	This class should include publications relating to student recruitment (UK and International), including the college prospectus. It will also include information related to the learning experience. There will be some overlap with Student Administration and Support. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospectus • Open days • Entry requirements • Widening participation 	Electronically	Free

³ Where these are already in the public domain web links should be provided or details of how they can be obtained.

⁴ Many of these may already be published, but an institution may wish to provide links to them in these cases.

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8.3	Public relations	<p>This class should contain information that is created specifically by the institution to help publicise its facilities and activities. The majority of such information will have been created for prospective and current students, but may still be of considerable interest to those wishing to know more about what the institution has to offer and the activities of its students and staff. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • Prospectus • Course brochures • Newsletters and magazines • Current information provided to an enrolled student (ie contents of the 'welcome pack') 	Electronically	Free
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