

Freedom of Information policy

The Freedom of Information Act (2000) gives the general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. It came into force in January 2005. This legislation gives the public the opportunity to find out what the School does and how we do it, and makes us more accountable. This policy covers:

1. Scope of the policy

1.1 The Freedom of Information Act applies to all recorded information held by the School and its staff, regardless of format, storage medium and age.

1.2 The Act places the following requirements on the School:

- Information which is routinely published by the School is made available in accordance with the School's Publication Scheme
- Information which is not covered by the Publication Scheme is made available to enquirers on request, within 20 working days, unless a valid exemption or limit applies
- Exemptions under the Act and Regulations are applied appropriately, and in accordance with the legislation
- A fair and efficient internal appeal system is administered
- A properly structured approach to managing records is in place to ensure that essential records of the School's activities are maintained in appropriate detail

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The School has a legal responsibility to comply with the Act and is accountable to the Information Commissioner. The Senior Management Team member with overall responsibility for this policy is the Secretary & Registrar. The Director of the School has the final decision on the disclosure of information.

2.2 The School's Archivist & Records Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of compliance with the Act. This includes the development of procedures, guidance and standards of good practice; their promotion to staff through training and outreach; the maintenance and periodic review of the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme; the co-ordination of responses to more difficult or complex information requests; and the provision of advice and assistance on Freedom of Information issues.

2.3 All staff have a responsibility to respond to requests for information in accordance with the Act and to provide the Archivist & Records Manager with all the necessary advice and assistance when requested to do so for the purpose of responding to requests for information. There are criminal penalties (a fine of up to £5000) for any staff member concealing, amending or destroying information which has been subject to a Freedom of Information request.

3. Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been formulated within the context of the following School documents:

- Records Management policy
- Information Management & Security policy
- Data protection policy

Compliance with this policy will in turn facilitate compliance not only with information-related legislation (specifically DP 1998) but also with other legislation or regulations (including audit, equal opportunities and research ethics) affecting the institution.

4. Guidance

Guidance on the procedures necessary to comply with this policy is available from the Archivist & Records Manager. This guidance covers:

- Introduction to Freedom of Information
- A guide for staff on dealing with requests for information
- Frequently asked questions on Freedom of Information

This guidance is available on the [FOI intranet pages](#) (LSHTM staff only)

The School's publication scheme and information for the public is available on the [FOI internet pages](#)

5. Status

This policy was approved by the Information Services Advisory Group in May 2006 and by Senior Management Team in June 2006. It was reviewed and approved by ISAG in November 2009.

It will be reviewed every three years.

6. Contacts

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