Richmond upon Thames College
Freedom of Information Policy
Publication Scheme

Introduction
What is the scheme?

The Publication Scheme is a guide to the information routinely published by Richmond upon Thames College, or which it intends to publish. The scheme provides a description of the "classes" or types of information published.

Adopting a publication scheme is a requirement of Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The purpose of the Act is to promote greater openness by public authorities (i.e. government and other public sector organisations, including Universities and Further Education Colleges).

The Richmond upon Thames College scheme follows the Model Publication Scheme produced for Further Education Colleges (MPS) by the Information Commissioner.

How do I obtain information covered by the publication scheme?

Richmond upon Thames College will make available items which belong to classes in the Publication Scheme. The MPS has been drawn in such as way as to exclude classes of information that are exempt under the Freedom of Information Act or from 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.

Main groups of classes of information

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

Information can be obtained by writing to:
The Clerk to the Corporation
Richmond upon Thames College
Egerton Road
Twickenham
TW2 7SJ

How much do printed publications cost?

Printed information on courses and services offered by the College is available free of charge, as are packs issued to people responding to notices of job vacancies.

The College will charge the fee indicated per document for other publications covered by the Publication Scheme and/or other documents requested under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act but, at its discretion, the College may waive the charge.

If requested, we will produce publications in other formats but, in these cases, we will usually make a charge, amounting to the actual cost of producing the item in the format requested and sending it.

If you request a publication in another format, we will tell you, in advance, what the cost will be.

Questions, Comments and Complaints

If you are not able to obtain what you require, of if you have any questions, comments or complaints about this scheme, please contact the Clerk to the Corporation at the address shown above. The Clerk to the Corporation can also be contacted by e-mail at zoe.lawrence@rutc.ac.uk

Information not covered by the publication scheme

Since 1 January 2004 you have the right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request any information (subject to certain exemptions) which the College has not already made available through its publication scheme. Requests will have to be made in writing (to the Clerk to the Corporation at the address shown above) and, in general, the College will have 20 working days to respond. The College will charge a fee (details to be determined) but at its discretion, the College may waive the charge.

The College will not be required to release information to which an exemption in the Act legitimately applies. The exemptions most likely to apply in the case of the College include:

• Information accessible to applicants by other means
• Information intended for future publication
• Investigations and proceedings conducted by a public authority
• Law enforcement
• Prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs
• Health and Safety
• Personal information
• Information provided in confidence
• Legal professional privilege
• Commercial Interests

Where the College decides that, because of one of the exemptions, it should not provide the requested information, full reasons for that decision will be provided.

Complaints

We will do everything in our power to meet your information needs. However, if you have a complaint that we are unable to resolve, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner, the independent body which oversees the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

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

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
1.1	Legal Framework	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 web site (www.legislation.hmso.gov. uk/acts.htm) and need not be duplicated. 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.
1.2	How the institution is organised	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: • Organisational structure charts • Description of work/responsibilities of units
1.3	Information on the institutional context	This class should include information to be made available by FE corporations on: • 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 If some or all of the information listed above appears in another class(es), then cross-reference(s) to where in the publication scheme (PS) it appears should be included here.

1.4	Management Structure	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: • Description of Statutory Bodies (eg 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

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
2.1	Finance	Examples of the type of information in this class include policies and procedures relating to: • Budgets and accounts • Contracting • Goods and services • Insurance • Pensions • Remuneration of senior staff as published in annual accounts • Travel and subsistence
2.2	Resource Planning	Examples of the type of information in this class include policies and procedures relating to: • Budgets and accounts • Contracting • Goods and services • Insurance • Pensions • Remuneration of senior staff as published in annual accounts • Travel and subsistence

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
3.1	Employment and employee relations	Examples of the type of information in this class include: • 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
3.2	Equal opportunities/Diversity	Examples of the type of information in this class include: • 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
3.3	Human Resources Strategy (Optional)	This class sets out the general aims of the institution, priority areas and plans for addressing them. Examples of the type of information under this class should include any supporting policies and plans that are not covered in the classes specified below.

| 3.4 | Staff Development | 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:

• 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 |

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. *

	Class	Description
4.1	Estates	Examples of the type of information in this class include: • 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

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

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
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) *: • 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 If some or all of the information listed above appears in another class(es) then cross-reference(s) to where it appears in the PS should be included here.
5.2	Student Accommodation	This class should include information relating to: • Accommodation services
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: • Registry student records policies and procedures documents • Registry security and data protection policy and procedure documents

*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).

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: • Admissions and enrolment policies and procedures documents
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: • Code of student discipline and other policy and procedure documents • Internal student complaint and appeals procedures
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: • Learning development and support Personal development advice • Services for students with special needs
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: • Terms of reference of staff/student liaison committee(s) • Minutes of previous staff/student liaison committee(s) meetings
5.8	Student Policies	This class should include a guide to all student policies issued by the institution: • Policies relating to students not included elsewhere in the PS • Reference to student policies included elsewhere in the PS

5.9	Student Welfare	Examples of the type of information in this class include:
		• Welfare/advice services
		• Health services
		• Careers services
		• Sports and recreational facilities
		• Housing
		• Finance
5.10	Student Associations and Activities	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:
		• Students' Union Constitution, Code of Practice, List of Officers and any other related documents

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
6.1	Availability and Conditions of use of facilities	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 (eg breach of copyright, email spamming of an external site) are appropriately dealt with. Examples of the type of information in this class include: • 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 (eg 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, eg temporary staff, short course or conference use, 'taster sessions' etc • There should be a pointer to other codes of conduct or rules external to the institution which may apply to the user (eg JANET acceptable use rules, Athens registration rules) • Access to/use of Archives, including how far back in time information exists and if so to what extent it is available* • Details of logging, monitoring and procedures followed in case of breach of conditions of use should also be included here

* Institutions may wish to indicate that only information back to a certain point will be available through its publication scheme.

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.
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: • Security policies (ie 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
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: • Policies relating to the procurement and disposal of equipment • Collection management/preservation strategy (including policy on disposal of stock)
6.5	Scope of collections held	Examples of the type of information in this class include: • Guides to collections • Scope and availability of catalogues

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
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).
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: • Term dates • Structure of courses • Qualification gained • Changing courses • Work experience
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: a) Information on programme approval, monitoring and review: • Programme specifications • Annual monitoring and review processes • Accreditation and monitoring reports by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies b) Information on assessment procedures and outcomes: • Assessment strategies, processes and procedures • The range and nature of student work c) Information on student satisfaction with their college experience, covering the views of students on:

		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
		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
		• 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
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: • Job titles of academic staff and support staff • Contact details for each school/department
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: • Examination periods • Examination regulations • Appeal procedures • Policy on plagiarism • External examination bodies

| 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:

• Information for home/EU students

• Information for international students

• Information on other charges |

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 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 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
8.1	Community Liaison	This class should contain information about the institution's relationship with its local community. The information included within this class represents the institution's approach to maintaining and fostering that relationship. An example of the type of information in this class is: • Policies relating to the institution's community relations
8.2	Government and Regulator Relations	Information included within this class relates to the activities undertaken by the institution to raise additional revenue to that provided by its main funding bodies. An examples of the type of information in this class is: • Promotional material relating to institutional fundraising objectives including plans, prospectus etc, where their release would not damage the commercial interests of the institution
8.3		This class relates to the information that the institution is legally obliged to make available to its funding and/or monitoring bodies**. Such material may provide information as to how well the institution is performing. Examples of the type of information in this class include: • 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)
8.4	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:
		• Prospectus
		• Open days
		• Entry requirements
		• Widening participation
8.5	Public Relations	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: • Press releases • Prospectus • Course brochures • Newsletters and magazines • Current information provided to an enrolled student (ie contents of the 'welcome pack')

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

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

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