

PLUMPTON COLLEGE
Freedom of Information

A GUIDE TO THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 was designed to establish a culture of openness and transparency in public administration. It gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. A 'public authority' is defined in the Act, and includes but is not restricted to, central and local government, non-departmental public bodies, the police, the health service and schools, colleges and universities.

Every public authority must publish a scheme listing all the classes of information it makes available to the public. It must also make clear how the information described can be accessed and whether or not charges will be made

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.

The new Model Publication Scheme and definition document provided by the ICO for colleges of Further Education has been adopted by Plumpton College with effect from 1 January 2009 and replaces the Model Publication Scheme adopted by the College in 2004. The College is committed to publishing the information it describes.

The Model Publication Scheme provides a list of the information routinely published by colleges which the ICO expects them to make available. Plumpton College's Publication Scheme can be accessed from the Corporate section of its website: www.plumpton.ac.uk

Information to be made available by the College

The information colleges routinely publish falls into the following categories - these have been determined by the ICO:

- 1 *Who we are and what we do*
 - Organisational information – structures, locations, contacts

- 2 *What we spend and how we spend it*
 - Published accounts

- 3 *What our priorities are and how we are doing*
 - Strategies and plans, performance indicators, inspections and reviews

- 4 *How we make decisions*
 - Decision-making processes, records of decisions
- 5 *Our policies and procedures*
 - Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivery of College services and responsibilities
- 6 *Lists and registers*
 - Information legally required to be held in publicly available registers and logs
- 7 *The Services we offer*
 - Prospectuses, leaflets, advice and guidance, newsletters

How do I obtain information covered by the scheme?

Plumpton College will routinely make available items which belong to classes in the publication scheme upon request. Please note that a publication scheme relates to 'published' information, i.e. material covered has already been prepared in a format ready for distribution.

Information can be accessed from the College website www.plumpton.ac.uk and requests for information should be made in writing to:

The Clerk to the Corporation
Plumpton College
Ditchling Road
Plumpton
East Sussex
BN7 3AE

General information on the Freedom of Information Act and the Model Publication Scheme can be obtained from:

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

or via the internet at www.ico.gov.uk

How much do printed publications cost?

Printed information on courses offered by the college is offered free of charge, as are information packs issued to people responding to job advertisements.

The college will charge £10 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.

The College may make a reasonable charge for information which is not available on its website. Where a charge is to be made this will be identified in the detailed Scheme.

What about information not covered by the publication scheme?

The college will not be required to release information if:

- It does not hold the information
- The information is exempt under one of the FOI exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) exceptions, or its release is prohibited under another statute.
- The information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible; or, it would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release.

The FOI exemptions most likely to apply in the case of the college include:

- Information accessible to applicants by other means
- Information intended for future publications
- 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.

Questions, comments and complaints

If you are not able to obtain what you require, or if you have any questions, comments or complaints about this scheme, please contact the Clerk to the Corporation at the address given above. The Clerk can also be contacted by email (jenny.brooker@plumpton.ac.uk).

Complaints

We will do everything in our power to meet your information needs. However, if you have a complaint 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:

Further information on the Freedom of Information Act

More information about the Freedom of Information Act is available from

The Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House

Water lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel. 01625 545700 f: 01625 524510 Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk