Freedom of Information Policy

Policy Area:	**General Corporate**
Policy Lead:	**Chief Operating Officer**
Approval By:	**Board**
Date of Approval:	**December 2024**

POSITIVITY **PROUD** UNITY
RESPECT OPPORTUNITY DIVERSITY

Contents

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 higher education/further education

3.1.   East Sussex College 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 function of institution a number of optional classes of information are included. As a result, models within the sector will vary slightly. Any optional classes relevant to the college have been included in its scheme.

4.   Accessing information covered by the publication scheme

4.1.   The classes of information the college publishes are described in the second part of this document. Next to each class the college has indicated the manner in which the information described will be available, and whether charges apply. To request information available through the publication scheme, please contact:

Freedom of Information
East Sussex College Group
Cross Levels Way
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 2UF

Email: FOI@escg.ac.uk

4.2.   Please note that a publication scheme relates to published information. Therefore, material covered has already been prepared in a format ready for distribution.

5.   Accessing information not covered by the publication scheme

5.1.   From 1 January 2005 any member of the public has the right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request any information held by a public authority which has not already been made available through its publication scheme.

5.2.   Requests for information which is not covered by the publication scheme must be made in writing to:

Freedom of Information
East Sussex College Group
Cross Levels Way
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 2UF

Email: FOI@escg.ac.uk

5.3.   A response will normally be made within 20 working days and a fee may be charged which will be calculated in accordance with the fees regulations. However, information will not be required to be released where an exemption from the Act legitimately applies.

5.4.   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.

6.   Procedure for complaints relating to supply of information

6.1.   Persons wishing to make a complaint or comment regarding provision of information under the Freedom of Information Act should address their comments in writing to the contact details above.

6.2.   Wherever the college has refused to supply information requested under the Freedom of Information Act, the applicant has the right to complain to the Information Commissioner who may be contacted as follows:

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

By Live Chat: Make a complaint | ICO

Tel: 0303 123 1113

7. East Sussex College Freedom of Information Act publication scheme

7.1. Governance

7.1.1. This section covers information relating to the way the institution is governed and how decisions are made.

7.1.2. It includes information on the legal status of the institution, which member of staff or group within the organisation is responsible for specific functions and where they fit in the overall structure of the organisation.

7.1.3. 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
Legal framework	• Education Act 2011* • Further and Higher Education Act 1992* • Charities Act 2011 • Learning and Skills Act 2000* *The legislation is already publicly available	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga	No
	East Sussex College Group Instruments and Articles of Government	College website	No
	• Audit Code of Practice	Post-16 audit code of practice - GOV.UK	No
How is the institution organised	Organisational structure charts	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Information on the institutional context	Mission statement	College website	No
	Strategic Objectives	College website	No
	Annual report/accounts	College website	No
	Quality Assurance and Improvement policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Management structure (cont'd overleaf)	Governing Board membership	College website	No
	Code of Conduct for Governing Board	College website	No
	Standing Orders	College website	No
	Governors' induction/training policy	College website	No
	Description of sub-structures and committees including terms of reference and membership: • Corporation • Search and Governance	College website	No

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
	• Audit • Finance • Remuneration • Curriculum and Standards • Human Resources		
	Minutes and papers of Board and Committee meetings: • Agendas and minutes • Reports and papers	College website	No
	Appointment Committees and procedures	College website	No

7.2. Financial resources

7.2.1.   This section covers information on the institution's strategy and management of financial resources.

7.2.2.   The Finance department provides accounting, procurement and contracting services, helping to make best use of resources and fulfilling statutory responsibilities.

7.2.3.   Information that may damage the college's commercial interests will be excluded from this publication.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Finance	Remuneration of senior post holders as published in annual accounts	College website	No
Resource Planning	Financial regulations including Procurement Policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
	Annual accounts	College website	No
	Corporate plan/vision	College website	No
	Annual report	College website	No

7.3. Human resources

7.3.1.   This section covers information on the college's strategy and management of human resources, rather than information relating to individual members of staff which is exempt from disclosure as personal information.

7.3.2.   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
Employment and employee Relations (cont'd overleaf)	• Induction policy • Staff recruitment and selection policy • Generic terms and conditions of employment • Staffing structure • Organisation charts • Salary scales • Grievance procedure	• Electronic • College website (for certain documents) • Paper	No No Yes

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
	• Staff disciplinary policy and procedures • Staff capability policy • Anti-harassment and bullying policy • Health, safety & welfare policy • Whistleblowing policy		
Equality and diversity	Diversity, equity & inclusion policy	College website	No
Staff development	• Induction policy • Probation and appointment support policy • Appraisal procedure • CPD guidelines • Staff training and development policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes

7.4. Physical resources

7.4.1.   Institutions are often substantial land and property owners in their own right.

7.4.2.   Classes in this section cover information at a strategic level relating to the college's management of its physical resources.

7.4.3.   Information that provides specific details of the college's future plans to alter its estate may be exempt from disclosure where such disclosure would damage its commercial interests.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Estates	Examples of the type of information in this class include: • Accommodation strategy • Location map and site addresses • Site plans • Procurement policy • Catering services • Planned maintenance programmes • Environmental policy • Health and safety procedures for hiring and managing contractors	• Electronic • College website (for certain documents) • Paper	No No Yes

7.5. **Student administration and support**

7.5.1.   This section contains information on how the college manages the administration and progression of its students from admission to course completion, including student support services.

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

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Information on student admission, progression and completion	• The range of student entrants classified by age, gender, ethnicity and disability • Student progression, retention and completion data • Data on qualifications awarded to students	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Student admission and enrolment	• Admission procedures • Examination policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Student discipline	• Learning and behaviour policy • Complaints policy • Student assessment • Malpractice policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Student support services	• Student handbook • Discretionary student support fund policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Student liaison	Student Council minutes	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Student policies	• Anti-bullying policy • Safeguarding policy • Religion and belief policy statement • Smoking policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Student welfare	Information and guidance strategy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
	Student services information	College website	No
Student associations and activities	Student Union constitution, code of practice and list of officers	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes

7.6. **Information services**

7.6.1. This section covers those functions within the college that provide access to information to the student body and both academic and administrative staff. These include libraries, computing services and information support services.

7.6.2. Such functions may be managed separately from each other, or in various combinations.

7.6.3. 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.

7.6.4. Information services inevitably hold large quantities of personal data that are exempt from general disclosure.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Availability and conditions of use of facilities	• Acceptable use policy for institutional IT facilities and systems • Email policy • Internet acceptable use policy • Social network policy	College website	No
Mission statements and related documents	Service standards	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Policies regarding data and information	GDPR policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes

7.7. **Teaching and learning**

7.7.1. This section contains information regarding the management of teaching and learning within the institution including the mechanisms for reviewing and ensuring the quality of teaching provided.

7.7.2. (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)*).

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Academic year dates	College calendar	College website	No
Further course information	• Prospectus • Course information (student portal)	College website	No
Information on internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards	Annual self-assessment report	College website	No
	Inspection report(s)	Ofsted website	No
	Quality assurance and improvement policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
	Complaints policy and procedure	College website	No
	Examination policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes

Study assessment strategy	Assessment policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
	Internal assessment and Appeals policy and procedure	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
Tuition fees	Tuition fee policy	• Electronic • Paper	No Yes
	Course information (student portal)	College website	No

7.8. External relations

7.8.1. This section covers information relating to the college's relationship with its external environment. These include 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.

7.8.2. By virtue of its nature most institutions will probably find that the majority of these classes are already made available to the public by some means. Members of the public are also likely to find the same or related information is available from external partners with which the institution has links.

Class	Description	Manner	Fee
Government and regulating body regulations	Annual report	College website	No
	Self-assessment report	College website	No
	Inspection report(s)	Ofsted website	No
Marketing and recruitment	Prospectus	College website	No
	Open days	College website	No
	Course information (learner portal)	College website	No
Public relations	News and events	College website	No
	Prospectus	College website	No
	Course information (student portal)	College website	No
	Student handbook	College website	No