

THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

A guide for applicants

1. Rights to information

From 1 January 2005 the Freedom of Information Act provides members of the public with new rights of access to recorded information held by public authorities, including Universities. These rights are, however, subject to a range of exemptions that aim to preserve confidentiality or to serve the public interest and allow the University to withhold information.

The Act gives applicants two new rights:-

- to be told whether it holds information of the description specified in the request and, if that is the case,
- to have the information communicated to them, subject to specific exemptions.

The intention is to promote greater openness and accountability and serve the public interest with a move to increased transparency in how organisations operate and carry out their responsibilities.

2. Procedure for applicants

- Potential applicants are advised to browse the University's website and Publication Scheme before making a formal, written request for information:

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk> (home page)

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/freedom> (The University of Bolton Publication Scheme)

Information included in our website and Publication Scheme is exempt from the legal rules governing the processing of requests.

- A request must be in writing to be valid (by letter, e-mail or fax). Applicants must provide their name, contact address and a clear description of the information requested.
- To facilitate an efficient response we recommend that requests should be addressed to the most appropriate Department listed on the University's website.

- Applicants wishing to make a Subject Access Request, which is for personal information about him or herself, are advised to consult the University Data Protection Policy and apply to Human Resources or to the relevant Department/Unit.

3. The University's duties and further information

- The University has duties to consider requests for information and to consider exemptions which prevent specific types of information from being provided. If an exemption is enforced and the information or part thereof cannot be supplied, an explanation will be provided.
- Fees may be applied in accordance with applicable legislation and University policy. Any fee must be paid before the requested information can be released.
- Further guidance is provided at <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/freedom>

4. Complaints

- If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request or with the reasons we have given for refusing to provide information, you have the right to complain.
- We request that you first do this informally by discussing the issues with the member of staff that has replied to your request, or with the Pro Vice Chancellor (Strategic Planning & Communications) who can be contacted on 01204 903009. You can also complain formally in writing to:

The University Secretary (Fol complaints)
 The University of Bolton
 Deane Road
 Bolton
 BL3 5AB

- The Information Commissioner is responsible for enforcing the implementation of the Fol Act. Once you have exhausted the University's complaints procedure you may if necessary complain to:

Information Commissioners' Office
 Wycliffe House
 Water Lane
 Wilmslow
 Cheshire
 SK9 5AF