

SOUTH DEVON COLLEGE
Freedom of Information Policy



Document control

Version	Date	Author(s)	Notes on Revisions
1.0	01/02/11	Liz Wiltshire-Meads	New policy
1.1	22/6/12	Dan Hallam	Updated to reflect staff responsibilities
1.2	1/9/16	Dan Hallam	Updated to reflect staff responsibilities

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Freedom of Information Act deals with **official organisation information** held by the College. Official information refers to recorded information such as emails, meeting minutes, research or reports.
- 1.2 The Data Protection Act applies to **personal information** and ensures that it is handled properly. For further information on data protection please see the Data Protection Policy.
- 1.3 Enquiries and requests for information are to be managed by Department but centrally recorded with the Assistant Principal - Systems, Information, Performance and Apprenticeships.
- 1.4 Most enquiries and requests should be easily dealt with and may not be considered as FOI requests but more general enquiry ([see 3.1](#)).
- 1.5 All staff must be aware of College duties including the College's Publication Scheme which can be found on the website.
- 1.6 Any requests received from the media/press are to be referred to Marketing in the first instance.

2. DUTIES OF THE COLLEGE

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act requires the College to:

- 2.1 Respond to a valid, written request for information within **20 working days** of receiving it. This includes letter, fax and email. Requests can be addressed to any member of staff.
- 2.2 Produce and regularly review a Publication Scheme.
- 2.3 Endeavour to provide the information requested in the format requested.
- 2.4 Provide advice and assistance to enquirers and applicants. We may need to seek clarification of the information requested but will not ask why the information is required.
- 2.5 Take proper consideration of the grounds for refusing to disclose information, including exemptions.

2.6 Explain a refusal to supply information in writing, informing the applicant of our [Complaints Procedure](#) and their subsequent right to complain to the [Information Commissioner](#).

3. PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION (ALL STAFF)

3.1 Most requests for information will reflect the normal business of the College and will be easily satisfied by providing documents or web-links already prepared for such purposes (for example, leaflets and prospectuses). In dealing with these, there is no need to add to the administrative burden and should be dealt with there and then by the Department.

3.2 If the request falls outside the normal remit please refer the request to the Assistant Principal - Systems, Information, Performance and Apprenticeships.

4. ENQUIRIES: POTENTIAL APPLICANTS, PERSONAL VISITORS AND PHONE CALLS:

These enquirers should be:

4.1 Provided with suitable guidance to help them identify the information required.

4.2 Advised to consult [South Devon College's website](#) and [Publication Scheme](#) if appropriate.

4.3 Advised to put their request in writing if it cannot be dealt with immediately.

5. FURTHER GUIDANCE

5.1 There is a [Freedom of Information Procedure](#) and associated [appendices](#) which provide the next level of detailed guidance on the management of requests.

5.2 In addition, advice and guidance are available from the Assistant Principal - Systems, Information, Performance and Apprenticeships:

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