

Freedom of Information Policy

Author:	Data Protection Officer	Approved by:	Board of Corporation
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The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) gives rights of public access to information held by public authorities. Section 19 of the FOIA requires every public body to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which has been approved by the Information Commissioner, and to publish information in accordance with the scheme. The Act aims to promote greater openness and accountability across the public sector, by giving a general right of public access to all types of 'recorded' information held by public authorities, which includes all Further Education Colleges.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has developed a model publication for Further Education Colleges. Barking & Dagenham College has adopted the model publication scheme.

A freedom of information request form is included at the back of this policy which may be completed electronically or printed and posted. Please use the email address: FOI@bdc.ac.uk. You do not have to use this form to make your request but it will help the College deal with your request as promptly as possible. Alternatively please make your request as detailed below:

Some documents are available via the College website. To request any other information available under the publication scheme please contact:

Data Protection Officer
Barking & Dagenham College
Dagenham Road
Romford
Essex
RM7 0XU

FOI@bdc.ac.uk.

Information held by the College that is not published under this scheme can be requested via the Data Protection Officer, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. In order for a request to be treated as having been made under the Act, it must be:

- made in writing;
- state the name of the applicant and give an address for correspondence;
- clearly describe the information which is requested.

Not all information that the College holds is accessible to members of the public, for example data covered under the UK General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018. Personal information is not published, nor is information that is in draft form or that would compromise our planning process if it were to be disclosed. However, we aim to ensure transparency in our activities and will respond positively to your requests as far as possible.

PUBLICATION SCHEME

Introduction

This guide has been produced to meet the requirements of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Publication Scheme and definition documents provided by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for Further Education Colleges has been adopted by Barking & Dagenham College with effect from February 2019. The Policy & Resources Committee formally approved the detail and content of the scheme at its meeting on 19 June 2019. The document was further approved for continued use at the Corporation Meeting held in July 2020 noting no subsequent amendments.

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.
- 2.3 Barking & Dagenham College has adopted the model publication scheme developed for the Further Education sector and is therefore committed to publishing the information it describes. The purpose of the model is to prevent 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 the 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 our scheme.

3. Who we are and what we do

- 3.1 Barking & Dagenham College (BDC) is a General Further Education (FE) College situated on the eastern boundary of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
- 3.2 The College has over 1,700 courses available across an exciting and diverse range of subject areas, offering a comprehensive choice of full and part time routes into learning. The College offers both vocational and academic courses providing the skills needed to succeed in career choices. The College has around 12,500 students joining us each year. Of which around 3,300 are age 16 – 18 and 9,000 are 19+.

4 Accessing information covered by the publication scheme

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

- What we are and what we do: Organisational information – structures, locations, contacts;
- What we spend and how we spend it: - Published accounts;
- What our priorities are and how we are doing: Strategies and plans, performance indicators, inspections and reviews;
- How we make decisions: Decision making processes, records of decisions;
- Our policies and procedures: Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivery of college services and responsibilities;
- Lists and registers: Information legally required to be held in publicly available registers and logs;
- The Services we offer: Prospectuses, leaflets, advice and guidance, newsletters.

4.2 Next to each class we have indicated the manner in which the information described will be available. We have also indicated whether charges apply to material in each class.

5 What about information not covered by the publication scheme?

5.1 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, you have the right to request any information held by a public authority which it has made available through its publication scheme.

5.2 Requests will have to be made in writing and, the College will have 20 working days to respond. We may charge a fee, which will have to be calculated according to Fees Regulations. You should note we will not be required to release information to which an exemption in the Act legitimately applies (examples are identified below). However, where this is the case, we will explain to you why we are not releasing the information and we accept that we may also have to justify this to the Information Commissioner.

5.3 Exemptions include:

- Information already available elsewhere: If this is the case, we will, where we can, direct you to where you will find the information you are looking for;
- Information provided in confidence: You should note that certain information is supplied to use in confidence and the Act obliges us to hold these things confidentially and not to disclose them;
- Personal information: This is covered by the Data Protection Act and is only available to the individual concerned;
- Investigations and proceedings: If an investigation is ongoing it is unlikely that we will be able to let you have information until all proceedings are finalised;
- Information intended for future publications: If we intend to publish the information you want you may have to wait until it is published before you can have access to it.
- Information that the Principal of the College decides is not in the public interest to disclose.

6 Our policy on charging for information

6.1 Much of our information is available to you free of charge. However, because of the costs involved in locating or copying what you need, the College retains the right granted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to charge fees where necessary and these will be in accordance with the Act and any other relevant legislation. Where compilation of data is in our view particularly onerous it will be our intention to charge an additional sum of £25 per person hour to cover locating documents, copying and postage (up to a maximum of £450 as defined within the Act).

7 Further information

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 appeal. Questions, comments or complaints should be sent to:

Principal & Chief Executive
Barking & Dagenham College
Dagenham Road
Romford
Essex
RM7 0XU

If we are not able to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction, please contact the Information Commissioner at: <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
WILMSLOW
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME FOR FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

1. Who we are what we do		
Class	Description	Manner
Legal Framework	<p>The Corporate Status of Barking & Dagenham College is conferred by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The College is an exempt Charity for the purposes of the Charities Act 2011.</p> <p>The actual legislation is already publicly available, for example, on the HMSO website (www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts.htm)</p> <p>Instrument and Articles of Government</p>	<p>Electronic/ Website</p> <p>Government Website</p>
Corporate Structure	<p>Corporate Body Determination of Membership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporation Meetings Schedule • Corporation and Committee Structure • Corporation and Committee Minutes • 'Meet the Governors' • Statement of Governance/Terms of Reference for the Corporation • Search Committee Terms of Reference • The role of a College Governor • The role of a Student Governor 	Website
How the institution is organised	Organisational and management structure charts – current information only.	Paper/e-mail
Information on the institutional context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Deliverables/Directions 	<p>Website</p> <p>Paper/email</p>
Marketing and Recruitment and public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospectus (which includes entry requirements for courses) • Newsletters • Information, Advice & Guidance Policy • Open days • Social Media • Higher Education Student Protection Plan • HE Access & Participation Statement 	<p>Website/paper</p> <p>Electronic/paper</p> <p>Website/Social media</p> <p>HE Section on the College website</p>

Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply Chain Fees & Charging Policy • List of Subcontractors 	Website Website
2. What we spend and how we spend it		
Class	Description	Manner
Funding/income	Information on the sources of funding and income, such as grants, tuition fees, endowment and investment income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Statements • Supply Chain Fees & Charging Policy 	Website
Budgetary and account Information and Financial Audit Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Statements 	Website
Capital	Information on major plans for capital expenditure. Information related to capital expenditure upon completion of the project when accounts have been audited.	Available on request
Financial Regulations and Procedures	Financial regulations and procedures including procurement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Regulations 	Available on request
Register of Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of suppliers used within College 	Available on request
Procurement and Tendering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services • Supplier terms and conditions of goods and services 	Available on request

Staff pay and grading structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration of senior staff as published in financial statements • Information on the grading structures used within College and the associated salaries • Pension scheme information as contained in the annual accounts 	Website Available on request Website
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing		
Class	Description	Manner
Corporate and Strategic Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Directions 	Available on request
Mission Statements and related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Vision, Mission and Values 	Website
Teaching, Learning and Assessment (See also information on internal procedures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching & Learning Strategy • Self-Assessment Report • Quality Improvement Plan 	Available on request
Student Learning Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance and Support • Supporting Young People in Care and Care Leavers • Student Handbook • Safeguarding & Promoting the Welfare of Children & Adults at Risk 	Website Website Paper Website
Government and regulatory documents	Information that the College 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted report • Qualification Success Rates • Education and Skills Funding Agency • Department for Education • Office for Students • Quality Assurance Agency report 	Website Associated websites

Estates/Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Policy • Map of main buildings. • CCTV • Health and Safety Policy • Address of main site and any other locations 	Available on request Website
Policies with regard to data and information	GDPR Policies	Website
6. Lists and registers		
Class	Description	Manner
Information we are legally required to hold in registers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of Interests • Asset register • Data Breach Register 	Available on request
7. The services we offer		
Class	Description	Manner
Prospectus and Course offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospectus and course offer 	Website
Student enrolment and admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission & Enrolment Policy • Fee Policy 	Website
Welfare and counselling services	Information detailing additional learning support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Policy 	Website
Student Financial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy • 19+ Discretionary Fund Policy • Loans Bursary Fund Policy • Admissions & Enrolment Policy • Tuition Fees Policy 	Website Available on request

Freedom of information – request form

Date of Request:

Name of Applicant:

**Address (including postcode):
(if information is required by post)**

Email address:

Phone number (optional):

(Please provide at least one contact method)

Description of the information requested (please include any details that may help to identify and locate the information):

Please indicate your preference for receiving the information by putting an 'X' in the relevant box below (we will try to meet your preference wherever possible).

Paper copy

Electronic copy

Pre-arranged personal inspection

Please advise of any special requirements:

Please note: if the information you have asked for requires a fee, we will let you know on receipt of your request. If you choose to accept this fee charge, we will process your request upon receipt of payment.

Please send this form by post to:

Data Protection Officer
Barking & Dagenham College
Dagenham Road
Romford
Essex
RM7 0XU

Or by email to:

FOI@bdc.ac.uk