

Freedom of Information Act 2000: Release of Staff Information

January 2008

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Freedom of Information Act 2000: Release of Staff Information January 2008		
Document author and department		Responsible person and department
Samantha Hill, Complaints and Information Disclosure Officer, Office of the University Secretary		Sally Hartley, University Secretary, Directorate
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1. Introduction

Requests for information held by the University (as a public authority) can be made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). It is possible that these requests can include requests for personal data about individual members of staff. This Policy sets out how the University will handle such requests.

2. Scope of this Policy

This Policy applies to all members of staff but will be of particular relevance to all senior members of staff from Heads of Departments, Schools and Services upwards, including Governors.

3. Requests by members of staff for their own data

Individuals have no right of access to their own personal data through the FOIA, as it is already possible to access this data through the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Any such request will be formally declined under section 40 of the FOIA but dealt with under section 7 of the DPA.

4. Requests for information relating to third parties

- 4.1 When information is requested about a member of staff, the University is only required to release information relating to the individual in a business capacity and anything relating to their private life, including in many cases precise salary details, will not be disclosed by the University.
- 4.2 The University will generally only disclose 'personal business' data in the following situations:
- i) Where the requests relates to senior members of the University – that is all Heads of Department, Schools and Services and above, including Governors. Staff of a more junior level will not normally have any data about them disclosed.
 - ii) Where the role of the individual in the information requested is significant, e.g. the name of the person acting on a complaint will be disclosed but the name of an individual who simply forwarded an email to that person will not be disclosed.
 - iii) Where the extent of the public funding involved is significant – the purpose of the FOIA is to make public authorities more transparent and accountable for their decision making. Where individuals are associated with decisions about large sums of the University's funds, their details may be released.

5. Decision to disclose data

In the event that a request for information about a member of staff or a Governor is received by the University, the request will be discussed with the member of staff/Governor before any information is disclosed.

6. Further information

Further information about the FOIA and the types of information that might be disclosed under the legislation is available from www.port.ac.uk/foi or Samantha Hill, the University's Information Disclosure Officer on extension 3642 or samantha.hill@port.ac.uk.

University of Portsmouth
Directorate
University House
Winston Churchill Avenue
Portsmouth PO1 2UP
United Kingdom

T: +44 (0)23 9284 3195
F: +44 (0)23 9284 3319
E: university.secretary@port.ac.uk
W: www.port.ac.uk