

PUBLICATION SCHEME 2009

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act), all public authorities are required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. The publication scheme helps to promote greater openness and accountability across the public sector.

In line with section 20 of the FOI Act the Information Commissioner has approved a new model publication scheme which all public authorities are required to adopt and will be effective from 1 January 2009.

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The University of Birmingham:

- is well-established as a world-class University;
- is one of the leading research-based universities in the United Kingdom;
- teaches and undertakes research in all the major disciplines;
- attracts students of high ability;
- has academic staff of distinction, many recognised as international leaders in their fields;
- has an annual income of more than £400 million.

Known as the UK's first "redbrick" university, Birmingham encompasses not only the lakeside setting and green landscape of its Edgbaston and Selly Oak campuses, but also has bases across Birmingham as well as the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford upon Avon, the Ironbridge Institute at the Ironbridge Gorge and at its outward bound Priestley Centre on the edge of Lake Coniston in the Lake District.

The University of Birmingham currently has ca 30,000 students (around 3,500 of whom are international students). The 2001 Research Assessment Exercise covering all UK universities awarded Birmingham the 5th highest number of international and world-class ratings. With ca 7,000 staff, the University is one of the biggest employers in Birmingham and a considerable business in its own right.

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The Purpose of a Publication Scheme

A publication scheme sets out the kinds of information that a public authority should make routinely available. The information should be easy for the authority and any individual to find and use.

Public authorities must adopt a publication scheme approved by the Information Commissioner. To reduce duplication and bureaucracy and to ensure consistency in the release of information, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has developed a model publication scheme that any public authority can use.

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The Model Scheme

The University of Birmingham publishes large volumes of information on its website, by entering a query into the search engine or by using the navigation buttons on the University's Homepage; you should be able to find the information which you are looking for.

The Model Publication Scheme lists classes of information which public authorities are expected to make publicly available. Most of the information made available under the scheme will be freely available for downloading from our website. However other information in this scheme will not be available from this website; this may be because you need to apply to another public authority for the data (in which case a URL web link will be provided) or the data may only be available when requested in writing, and will be free of charge unless otherwise stated.

The model scheme classifies information at a high level through the Definition Document which has been developed for each public authority sector. The University of Birmingham has used the Definition Document designed for Universities.

The Definition Document specifies seven classes of information. Information that a public authority holds will fall into these seven classes. This does not mean the authority must routinely release all the information covered by the broad definitions in the definition document for that sector.

The scheme sets out the circumstances under which an authority would not be required to make information routinely available. These are when:

- the information is not held;
- the information is exempt from disclosure, for instance personal data or commercial interest; or
- the authority cannot easily access the information.

Routinely published information should be available as part of an authority's normal business. Therefore the information should be easy to access through a website or be easily and quickly sent out by a member of the authority's staff.

The Information Classes are:

- 1. Who we are and what we do.**
- 2. What we spend and how we spend it.**
- 3. What our priorities are and how we are doing.**
- 4. How we make decisions.**
- 5. Our policies and procedures.**
- 6. Lists and registers.**
- 7. The services we offer.**

Examples of Information which falls within these classes can be found in [The Guide to Accessing Information.](#)

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Environmental Information

The Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) require public authorities to make environmental information progressively available electronically.

The University of Birmingham produces a wealth of information which can be found at:
<http://www.environment.bham.ac.uk/index.shtml>

If you are unable to find the information you are seeking on the University's website please submit a request in writing to

The Information Manager
Legal Services
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

Or email FOI@contacts.bham.ac.uk

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Accessing information covered by this publication scheme

Please see the Guide to Information which gives examples of the types of data which the University of Birmingham holds. The guide describes the manner in which the information will be made available (ie its format and location if appropriate). The University have also indicated whether charges apply to material in each class. Publications cited as being available on the University website are free to access in that format. In general, the supply of printed versions of the web pages or the hard copy version of the publication itself will incur charges, unless otherwise indicated.

Please note that a publication scheme relates to 'published' information. Therefore, material covered has already been prepared in at least one format ready for distribution. However, it is likely that the format in which particular publications are made available will change as the needs of the University change. These changes will be reflected in future editions of the Publication Scheme as appropriate.

Almost all publications listed in this publication scheme are copyright of the University of Birmingham and reproduction of material supplied through the publication scheme or in response to a request for information without the express permission of the University of Birmingham (or copyright holder) may be an infringement of copyright. Requests for permission to reproduce such material should be addressed to:

Legal Services
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

Copyright information in respect of the items on the University's web site is given at:

<http://www.bham.ac.uk/legal/>

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Information not covered by the publication scheme

From 1 January 2005 you will have the right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request any information held by the University which it has not already made available through its publication scheme.

Requests will have to be made in writing and, in general, the University will have 20 working days to respond. The University may charge a fee, which will have to be calculated according to Fees Regulations. The University will not be required to release information to which an exemption in the Act legitimately applies. However, the University will be required to explain to you why it is not releasing information and it may have to justify this to the Information Commissioner.

For full details on making a written request, please contact:

Legal Services
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

Or complete an [on-line request form](#)

Or email to: foi@contacts.bham.ac.uk

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Feedback

It is important that this publication scheme meets your needs. If you find the scheme difficult to understand, please let us know. We also welcome suggestions as to how our publications might be improved. Any questions, comments or complaints about this scheme should be sent in writing to:

Legal Services
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

Or email FOI@contacts.bham.ac.uk

If we are unable to resolve any complaint, you can complain to the Information Commissioner, the independent body which oversees the Freedom of Information Act:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

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Further Information

More information about the Freedom of Information Act is available on the Information Commissioner's website at:

<http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>

Please note that Scotland has its own Freedom of Information Act and Information Commissioner. For more information, please see the Scottish Executive's website at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/government/foi>

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[The Guide to Accessing Information](#)

The Guide to information provides examples of the types of information which the University of Birmingham holds and how to access this information.

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[Charging Policy for Freedom of Information Requests](#) - Please click on the title to see the charging policy.

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