



University of Central Lancashire

Freedom of Information Policy

Effective October 2015 - August 2018

STUDENT REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

uclan.ac.uk/studentcontract

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE

Freedom of Information Policy



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1. Freedom of information policy statement

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) is committed to complying with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and related legislation, including the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). The FOIA enables anyone, anywhere in the world, to request any recorded information held by, or on behalf of, UCLan. The EIRs enable similar access to environmental information. Information will be provided if it is held, unless one or more of the exemptions or exceptions listed in the legislation applies. Information which is exempt does not have to be provided.

UCLan aims to publish as much information as it can, both proactively and in response to requests under the FOIA and EIRs; however exemptions and exceptions will be applied where appropriate to ensure that information which is not suitable for publication is protected.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all recorded information held by UCLan or held by someone else on behalf of UCLan and includes information provided to the University by contractors, suppliers and other third parties. It does not apply to information which UCLan only holds on behalf of another person or organisation.

3. Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for ensuring that any request for information they receive is dealt with in line with the requirements of the FOIA and EIRs and in compliance with this policy. In addition, senior members of staff have responsibility for carrying out internal reviews where required, as set out in section 8 of this policy.

UCLan's Information Governance Officer manages and coordinates all requests for information received by the University and as such, any requests for information received by members of staff must be sent to the Information Governance Officer as soon as possible following receipt (DPFOIA@uclan.ac.uk).

4. Dealing with requests

UCLan will provide advice and assistance to help people make requests under the FOIA and EIRs. The University aims to respond to all requests promptly and at any rate, within the statutory response period of 20 working days following receipt of a valid request. This timescale can be extended under specific circumstances, for example where we have determined that an exemption applies and the University is considering whether or not it is in the public interest to disclose the information regardless of the exemption.

Written requests for information received by UCLan via post, email or other means will be treated as requests under the FOIA (or EIRs, where applicable) in cases where the information is not already publicly available or routinely disclosed on request. There is no need for requests to indicate they are made under the FOIA or EIRs; however applicants making requests must provide their real name and an address for correspondence (email or postal address). If a request is unclear, we will ask for clarification as soon as we can to enable us to proceed with considering the request.

Where an applicant indicates that they would like the requested information in a particular form i.e. paper, electronic or inspection at UCLan offices, we will comply with their preference where reasonably practicable, taking into account all the particular circumstances, including cost.

UCLan reserves the right to refuse requests under the FOIA where the cost of providing the information would exceed the statutory cost limit. This limit is currently £450, which equates to 18 hours' work at a statutory rate of £25 per hour. The University reserves the right to refuse requests under the EIRs where the request is considered to be manifestly unreasonable. Where we estimate that complying with a request will take more than 18 hours of officer time or is manifestly unreasonable, we will try to assist applicants to make refined requests which are more manageable.

5. Charges

Any charges for information contained within UCLan's publication scheme are detailed within the Guide to Information and/or the Schedule of Charges.

Information provided in response to FOIA and EIRs requests will be provided electronically and free of charge where possible; however there may be circumstances where we need to charge for information e.g. if it is only available in paper form and there is a large amount of copying involved. If there will be a charge for disbursements e.g. photocopying or postage in order to provide the information, we will inform applicants as soon as possible to see if they wish to proceed; however such charges will usually be waived if they amount to less than £10. Charges under these circumstances will be calculated at a rate of 10p per sheet of A4 for photocopying; postage will be calculated using Royal Mail's postage rates at the time the request is dealt with. Any other similar charges which may arise will be reasonable and will be calculated on the basis of the actual cost to UCLan of providing the information to applicants.

6. Relationship with the Data Protection Act 1998

UCLan is under a legal duty to protect personal data as required by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). The University will carefully consider its responsibilities under the DPA before disclosing personal data about living individuals, including current and former employees, students, alumni and any other individuals about whom we hold information.

7. UCLan's publication scheme

UCLan has adopted the Information Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme for universities and will maintain the scheme to ensure that the information it refers to is up-to-date.

All of the information referred to in the publication scheme is readily available to the public, either via the UCLan website, in hard copy on request or by inspection at UCLan offices, where offices can facilitate this. Some information contained within the scheme may only be available on payment of a fee, as explained in section 5 of this policy.

Further information about the publication scheme is available on the UCLan website. To find out what information is made available through the publication scheme and how to access it, see the Guide to Information on the publication scheme pages.

8. Complaints about requests for information

Anyone who has made a request for information to UCLan under the FOIA or EIRs is entitled to request an internal review if they are unhappy with the way their request has been handled. Internal reviews will be carried out by a senior member of staff who was not involved with the original decision. Any internal review will consider whether or not the request was handled appropriately, in line with the requirements of the FOIA or EIRs. Applicants wishing to ask for an internal review must do so within 40 working days of the date of UCLan's response to their request. UCLan aims to respond to internal reviews within 20 working days of receipt.

Anyone who is unhappy with the outcome of an internal review is entitled to complain to the Information Commissioner (www.ico.org.uk).

9. Contact Details

For advice and assistance from UCLan, please contact the Information Governance Officer:

DPFOIA@uclan.ac.uk

Legal Services
University of Central Lancashire
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 2HE

Tel: 01772 892561

Independent advice and information about the FOIA and EIRs is available from the Information Commissioner's Office:

www.ico.org.uk

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or

Tel: 0303 123 1113