Freedom of Information Policy

1 Introduction

This Policy forms part of a suite of policies and procedures that support an information governance framework.

Under the terms of Freedom of Information legislation (FoI) the University is expected to respond to any request for recorded information within 20 working days, subject to exemptions and limits on the amount of work to be undertaken. Environmental Information regulations (EIR) require similar measures for all environmental information held by the University. FoI also requires that the University maintains a publication scheme which lists all recorded information which is routinely made available.

2 Purpose

Compliance with this legislation will be achieved through the implementation of controls (people, process, technology) including measures to ensure that FoI and EIR requests are recognised when they are received by the University, and that they are dealt with appropriately within the time limit.

Measures will also be implemented to ensure that appropriate advice is given by the Information Governance Office regarding exemptions and the refusal of requests where necessary, to ensure that this is done in a way which is consistent and in line with the legislation.

The publication scheme will be maintained and kept up to date by the Information Governance Office, working in consultation with all areas of the University which hold relevant information.

3 Scope

For the purpose of this Policy, information includes the raw data from which information is derived.

This Policy applies to:

- all recorded information held and processed by the University. This includes any information created by the University or its staff in the course of University business. It includes information held in any system or format, electronic or manual;
- all approved users of University records including all members of staff, as well as individuals conducting work at or for the University and/or its subsidiaries, who have access to University information (“staff”). This includes temporary, honorary, visiting, casual, voluntary and agency workers, students employed by the University and suppliers (this list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- information held by third-parties where that information is a record of services provided to the University; and
- all locations in which University records are held including off-campus locations

4 Responsibilities and compliance framework

The University has a corporate responsibility to maintain its information and records management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. This responsibility therefore extends to all staff who work with University records.

Deans, Heads of School and Directors are responsible for ensuring that the information required for Freedom of Information responses is provided to the Information Governance Office in a timely manner to ensure that the University is able to respond to all requests within the prescribed time limit.

All staff and other approved users of University held information must:

- be able to recognise Freedom of Information or Environmental Information requests when they are received, and understand what to do with them to ensure that they are properly answered;
• respond swiftly and as a matter of priority to any request for information received from the Information Governance Office to ensure that the University is able to fulfil its obligations within the prescribed time limits;
• be aware that any recorded information created by the University is subject to Freedom of Information legislation, and that its content should be appropriate for public scrutiny.

The Information Governance Office is responsible for providing procedures, guidance and advice in support of this Policy and for training staff where necessary. It is also responsible for dealing with FoI and EIR requests, which includes co-ordinating the preparation and issue of responses to such requests.

5 Monitoring compliance

This Policy and its implementation are subject to internal monitoring and auditing throughout the University, and the outcomes from these processes will inform and improve practices as part of a commitment to continual improvement. The University will also undertake appropriate benchmarking and may be audited by external bodies.

Reports on the matters related to this Policy will be provided to the Information Governance Committee.

6 Review of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually or when significant changes are required.
If you are reading a printed version of this document you should check [http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=14915](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=14915) to ensure that you have the most up to date version.

### Version amendment history

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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reason for change</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>October 2012</td>
<td>Creation and approval by the Board of Governors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>December 2017</td>
<td>Minor amendments: removal of detailed legislation; consistency with other SOPs; links updated</td>
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### Document control box

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy title:</th>
<th>Freedom of Information Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date approved:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approving body:</td>
<td>Board of Governors</td>
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<td>Previous review dates:</td>
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<td>Next review date:</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:</td>
<td>Ordinance 14 Intellectual Property Rights, Data Protection and the Use of Information Systems, Statute XIII Part III disciplinary procedures for staff</td>
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<td>Equality relevance outcome:</td>
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#### Related policies:

#### Related procedures:
- Data Protection Standard Operating Procedures: [http://www.dataprotection.manchester.ac.uk/policiesandprocedures/](http://www.dataprotection.manchester.ac.uk/policiesandprocedures/)

#### Related guidance and / or codes of practice:
- BS ISO 15489:2001 standard for records management
- IT Security guidance: [http://www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/secure-it/](http://www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/secure-it/)

#### Related information:
- Policy owner: Director of Compliance and Risk
- Lead contact: Head of Information Governance