

INTRODUCTION

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.

3. The 'model' publication scheme for further education

3.1 Esher College has adopted the model publication scheme developed for the Further Education sector and is therefore committed to publishing the information it describes.

3.2 This model is designed for further education colleges and sixth form colleges across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the model is to save 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 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 us have been included in our scheme.

3.3 To assist with the development of the model, a number of institutions across the sector volunteered as pilots. Information about the pilot exercise is available from the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) website at: www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mps_overview

4. Who we are

Esher College aims to be the specialist provider of non-selective, open-access sixth form college education for SW London and North Surrey.

The College is committed to

- being a strong, successful educational community for the 16-19 age group, offering broad, balanced and coherent programmes of study to fully prepare students for continuing education, work and leisure.

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- providing a suitable range of additional courses to meet the identified needs of the local adult and wider community in specified niche market areas.
- developing in each student an enjoyment of learning, thereby promoting a culture of lifelong learning.
- promoting inclusivity, tolerance and respect for others at all times within a caring, supportive environment which values diversity.

5. Accessing information covered by the publication scheme

5.1 The classes of information we publish are described in the second part of the scheme.

5.2 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.

5.3 To request information available through our publication scheme, please contact:

The Principal's Secretary
Esher College
Weston Green Road
Thames Ditton
Surrey
KT7 0JB

5.4 Please note that a publication scheme relates to 'published' information. Therefore, material covered has already been prepared in a format ready for distribution.

6. What about information not covered by the publication scheme?

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

6.2 Requests will have to be made in writing and, in general, public authorities will have 20 working days to respond. They may charge a fee, which will have to be calculated according to Fees Regulations. They will not be required to release information to which an exemption in the Act legitimately applies. However, public authorities may be required to explain to the applicant why they are not releasing information and they may also have to justify this to the Information Commissioner.

7. Feedback

7.1 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 scheme might be improved. Any questions, comments or complaints about this scheme should be sent in writing to the Publication Scheme Co-ordinator below.

The MIS Manager

Esher College
Weston Green Road
Thames Ditton
Surrey

KT7 0JB

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

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

8. Further information: More information about the Freedom of Information Act is available on the Information Commissioner's website at: 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 www.scotland.gov.uk/government/foi