

Publication Scheme

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Introduction

Further Education (FE) Colleges are the main providers of vocational and technical education and training in Northern Ireland (NI). The nature of College provision is diverse and broad based ranging from A levels and GCSEs to BTECs, HNCs, HNDs, Apprenticeships, Foundation Degrees, Degrees and other specific training programmes. The FE Sector plays a central role in raising levels of literacy and numeracy and in up-skilling and re-skilling the population through a broad range of courses leading to qualification, particularly in Level 2 to Level 6.

There are 6 FE Colleges within Northern Ireland; Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC), Northern Regional College (NRC, North West Regional College (NWRC), South Eastern Regional College (SERC), South West College (SWC) and Southern Regional College (SRC).

As Non-Departmental Public Bodies, the Colleges are subject to legislation regarding information governance such as the Freedom of Information (2000).

The Freedom of Information Act (2000) (FOIA) gives everyone the Right to request information from public authorities, helping them to understand better how the College works, how we spend public money and how and why we make our decisions.

The Colleges encourage collaboration across the FE Sector where similar functions exist to embed a coordinated strategy towards best practice. The Sector has collaborated to develop a joint Publication Scheme and adopt agreed protocols regarding the release of information which is subject to FOIA.

What is a Publication Scheme?

A publication scheme is a document listing the information the College publishes and makes available to the public. This scheme commits Southern Regional College to making such information available as part of normal business activities and is a requirement under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 19 of the FOIA requires Public Authorities (i.e., Government and other public sector bodies, including Universities and Further Education Colleges) to produce "Publication Schemes", which are schedules of information to be routinely published by the Public Authorities.

In this context, '*publish*' is defined as 'to make information routinely available'.

The publication of information is designed to increase the transparency and accountability of the Public Authority by enabling members of the public to routinely access information relating to its functions. Information may be available via links to website information, documents and where possible it should be made available in a re-usable format (dataset).

In compliance with our obligations, the FE Sector will:

1. Proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the College and falls within the classifications below.
2. Specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
3. Proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
4. Produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
5. Review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
6. Produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
7. Make this publication scheme available to the public.

The format is in compliance with the ICO Model Publication Scheme and the FE Sector has based the categories of information we publish primarily on the [ICO Definition Document \(Definition document for Northern Ireland Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other public authorities\)](#) and in addition, guidance from the ICO to use [definition-document-colleges-of-further-education.pdf \(ico.org.uk\)](#)

Classes of Information

This scheme is divided into **classes of information**, outlining as a college, the following points:

Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, locations and contracts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement, and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing it

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and registers

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The services we offer

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions, and media releases. A description of the services offered.

Further details on these classes of information can be viewed [here](#)

Exemptions

There are some classes of information that the College is not required to make available. These classes are as below:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Information in draft form.

Information held by Southern Regional College that is not published within the scheme can be requested, where its provision will be considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. And the FE Sector Freedom of Information SOP.

The Freedom of Information Policy can be viewed on the College website [Freedom of Information Policy](#).

Requests for Information should be submitted to the Compliance Manager:

Ian Boden

Compliance Manager and Data Protection Officer

Southern Regional College

Banbridge Campus, Castlewellan Road, Banbridge, Co Down, BT32 4AY

E: dpo@src.ac.uk

How to use the Publication Scheme

The FE Sector has provided the tables within Classifications of Information, to enable individuals to browse our index of published information.

The Publication Scheme is divided into the categories listed above (See page 5). Within each category, the Colleges have provided the method by which the information is available. In most cases, a hyperlink will be provided to the information directly.

In some instances, e.g., where the information is too voluminous to publish online, the College will provide this upon request. Where this applies, the Publication Scheme will detail the appropriate contact details to direct such requests.

Requests for information which are or form part of a dataset or where the requester expresses a preference for the information to be electronic, will be released in.

Data sets published via the Publication Scheme will be periodically refreshed. This time will be determined by the business area.

Fees

Information which is published on the website, or which can be transmitted electronically will incur no fee.

We may charge for providing information in paper copy or on removable storage devices such as Computer discs or USB drives. Charges will reflect the actual costs of reproduction, consumables, and postage and will not exceed the costs accrued by the College or staff time.

If we intend to charge, we will tell you:

- the charge
- how it has been calculated
- how to pay

The requester will be made aware of any charges in advance of the information being collated.

Alternative Formats

If you would like this scheme, or any of the information it covers, in a more accessible format, please contact the **Freedom of Information Officer** at dpo@src.ac.uk to discuss additional ways in which the information may be made available to you.

Contact Details

Further details regarding this document can be obtained from the College's Data Protection Officer and Compliance Manager:

Ian Boden

Southern Regional College

Banbridge Campus, Castlewellan Road, Banbridge, Co Down, BT32 4AY

E: dpo@src.ac.uk

ICO Guidance

The FE Sector will continually refer to legislation and ICO guidance when processing Publication Scheme information requests.

Further information is available to the public on the ICO website at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/publication-scheme/>

Copyright

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