

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PROCEDURE

## Policy Review

<b>Policy/Procedure:</b>	Freedom of Information Procedure
<b>Director Responsible:</b>	Director of Human Resources
<b>Human Resources Committee Approval:</b>	11 October 2010
<b>Joint Consultative Committee:</b>	19 November 2010
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	29 September 2010

# Freedom of Information Procedure

## Purpose of the Procedure

To ensure that the College fulfils its statutory obligations as outlined in the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

That a clear procedure with guidelines is in place to deal with requests for information.

## Introduction

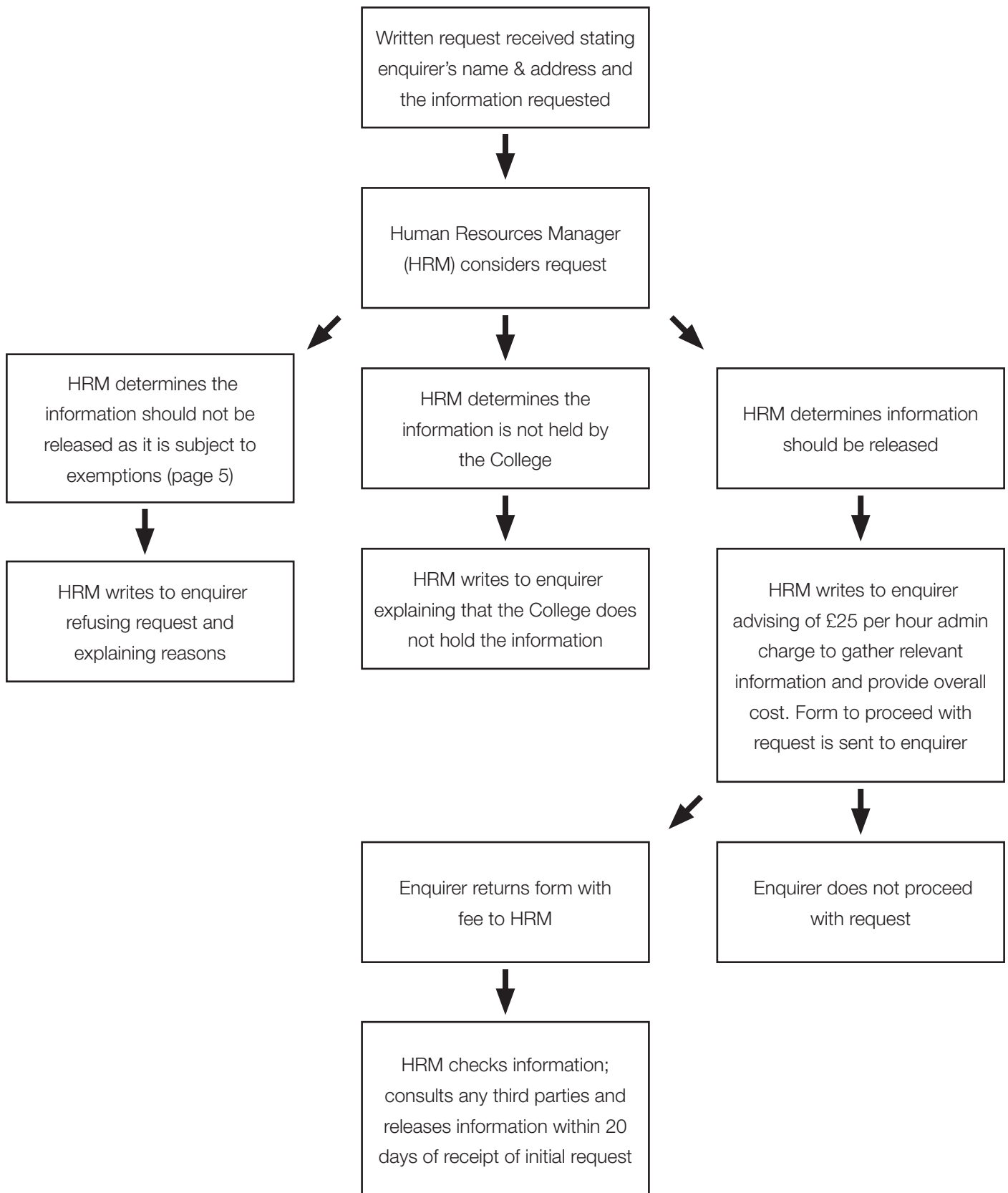
On 1 January 2005 the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) came into force. This Act gives a legal right for any person to ask an organisation within the public sector for access to information that it holds. The aim of the FOIA is to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public sector organisations and to improve the understanding of how public sector organisations operate.

## Principles

The College will:

- provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information.
- tell the enquirer whether it holds the information they are requesting (except where certain exemptions apply – see page 5).
- have a well managed records system to help meet any requests for information in an efficient manner.
- respond to any requests for information within 20 working days.
- not wilfully conceal damage or destroy information in order to avoid responding to a request for information.

## Procedure



### The costs of providing the information

- Photocopying, printing or reproducing documents
- Posting or sending the information to you another way
- Providing information in a format you specify - We can refuse to do this if it is not reasonably practical to do so

The College can refuse requests for information if costs exceed the appropriate limit of £450.

However, in assessing whether this is the case the College will take into account the costs involved in the following:

- Finding out if the information requested is held
- Locating information or documents
- Retrieving information or documents
- Extracting, editing and blanking out exempt information from documents

An hourly rate of £25 is set by the Act which obliges us to spend up to 18 hours on these activities before the appropriate limit is exceeded.

If the College thinks that the appropriate limit may be exceeded by your request we will contact you to discuss the options.

### Areas of Information which may be requested

<b>Who we are and what we do?</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Instrument and Articles of Government Organisation and Management Structure Memberships of Committees Student Council Constitution	Email /Paper Copy
<b>What we spend and how we spend it?</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Budgetary and accounts information Financial audit reports Capital programme Financial regulations and procedures register of suppliers Procurement and tender procedures Contracts	Email /Paper Copy
<b>What our priorities are and how we are doing?</b>	<b>Availability</b>
Annual report Strategic Plan Corporate and business plans Teaching and learning strategy Academic quality and standards External review information including Ofsted inspection and annual assessment report	Email /Paper Copy

<b>How we make decisions?</b>	
Minutes from meetings Governing body Academic boards Steering groups Procedures and policies for conducting college business Procedures and policies relating to human resources Procedures and policies relating to recruitment	Email /Paper Copy
<b>Our Policies and Procedures</b>	
Procedures and policies for conducting college business Procedures and policies relating to human resources Procedures and policies relating to recruitment	Email /Paper Copy
<b>Lists and Register</b>	
Any information we currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers Asset registers Disclosure logs	Email /Paper Copy
<b>The services we offer</b>	
Prospectus and course content Careers advice Sports and recreational facilities Library Advice and guidance Media releases	Email /Paper Copy

### Reasons for not providing the information

If the College refuses a request for the release of information it must be for one of the following reasons:

- The information is exempt under one of the FOI exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) exceptions, or its release is prohibited under another statute;
- The information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible; or,
- It would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release
- We do not hold the information

The College can refuse requests for information if costs exceed the appropriate limit of £450.

## **Responsibilities**

The Human Resources Manager (HRM) is responsible for the administration of the procedure. In the absence of the Human Resource Manager the Director of Human Resources will take this responsibility.

The Human Resources Manager must ensure:

- the correct items for release have been identified.
- the documents have been carefully read and that any personal information about people that is not a relevant part of the enquiry is removed
- identify any third party that might be affected by the disclosure (e.g. someone mentioned in notes of a meeting). If there is such a party consult with them before the information is actually released.
- no information is released until the completed form and fee have been received. If the 20 day deadline is reached and the fee has not been received a letter will be sent to the enquirer advising him or her that the information is ready for sending out, but the fee is still awaited.
- that any information released is in copied format - original copies must never be released.
- records of requests for information and progress are kept.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

### Request form

This form can be completed online and sent by email or alternatively it can be printed and sent to the address at the bottom of this form. You do not have to use this form to make your request but it will help us deal with your request as promptly as possible if you do. If you prefer, you can make your request in writing e.g. letter, email, fax or other form which we can use for reference.

Applicant name:

Address:

Email address:

Fax number:

(at least one of the above (address, email or fax) must be provided for contact purposes)

Phone number (optional):  Date:

Description of information you seek:

Any other details that may help us to identify and locate the information:

In what format would you prefer to receive the information (insert ) (we will try to meet your wishes as best we can)

Paper copy  Electronic copy  Summary  Pre-arranged personal inspection

Any special requirements:

Send this form by post or email to:

**Address** **The Human Resources Manager**

Nelson & Colne College  
Scotland Road  
Nelson  
Lancashire  
BB9 7YT

**Email** [humanresources@nelson.ac.uk](mailto:humanresources@nelson.ac.uk)

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