

What is records management?

Records management is the systematic control of all records (irrespective of the media format) from creation, use, reproduction to final disposition.

How does good records management benefit the College and you?

- It helps to ensure that information is found easily and is quickly accessible. Protects us by helping to ensure records remain authentic and retain their evidential value should they be needed in a court of law.
- It saves space and reduces duplication as records are disposed of or deleted at the appropriate time and therefore not kept for longer or shorter than necessary.

Tips on good records management

Consult the College Retention Schedule (available online) to ascertain how long records should be kept for and dispose of (or delete) records accordingly and in the appropriate manner.

Take time to regularly weed files (both paper and electronic) of unnecessary papers and/or documents.

Maintain shared paper and electronic filing systems that everyone in the department is aware of and has access to if authorised.

Further information

More information and guidance concerning records management can be found on the Archive and Corporate Records Unit (ACRU) web pages, including links to our e-learning course <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/acru/>

More information and advice regarding Freedom of Information and Data Protection is available on the Legal Services web pages <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/legal-services-office/>

Please also feel free to contact directly the Archive and Corporate Records Unit for more information, guidance, training or assistance concerning any of these issues.

Email: acru@imperial.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7594 8850 or +44 (0) 20 7594 8818

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London

Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Records Management and You!

It is the responsibility of all staff at Imperial College to be aware of how Information legislation may affect you and the way you do your job.

This leaflet provides an introduction to the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts and explains how effective records management can ensure compliance and help you work more efficiently in your role.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which came into force on 1 January 2005 entitles any individual to request any information held by the College, regardless of when it was created, by whom, or the form in which it is now recorded (paper, electronic, film etc.). The purpose of the Act is to encourage transparency, accountability and openness in publicly funded organisations.

What is a Freedom of Information request?

The request has to be made in writing (including email) but does not need to state that it is a Freedom of Information request, nor does the individual need to provide details as to why they require the information. The applicant needs to state their name, include an address for correspondence and describe the information required. However, they are not required to provide any proof of identity, and an email address is sufficient even if it is an anonymous webmail address (Hotmail, Gmail etc.). Therefore please treat all non-routine requests for information as Freedom of Information requests even if you have no idea who they are actually from.

Obligations in replying to a Freedom of Information request

- The College must respond to the individual applicant within 20 working days of receiving the request in writing
- The applicant must be told whether the College holds the requested information and have the information communicated to them subject to exemptions.

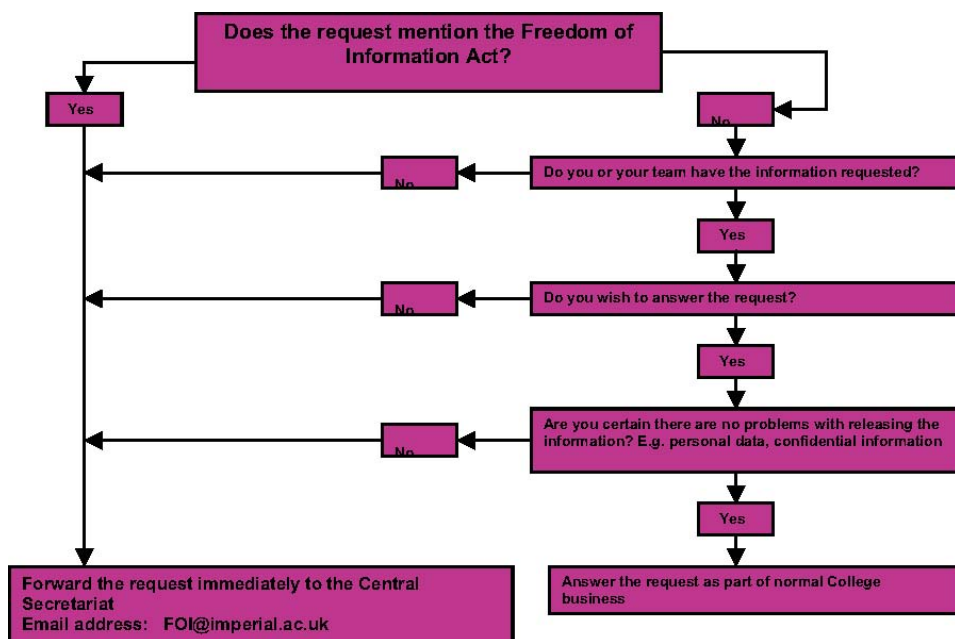
Exemptions

There are many exemptions that can apply to information. However, the starting point for considering any request is that the information should be released if possible.

What do I do if I receive a Freedom of Information request?

If you receive a request that specifically mentions Freedom of Information forward it to the Central Secretariat. If the request does not mention the Act but you are unsure or unwilling to answer the request then you should also contact the Central Secretariat:

Level 4 Faculty Building,
South Kensington Campus, London SW7 2AF
Email: foi@imperial.ac.uk



Data Protection

The Data Protection Act allows individuals (such as staff or students) the right to see any information held about them by the College, irrespective of its format. The Act also provides guidance on the handling of information.

Essentially the Act requires that any personal data, meaning information about an identifiable living person is processed fairly and lawfully, kept secure, up to date, accurate, relevant and for no longer than necessary. It should not be transferred outside of the EEA unless the country ensures an adequate level of protection.

What is a Subject Access request?

A request is when an individual asks to see the information held on them by the College. If you receive such a request immediately forward it to the Central Secretariat.

What do I need to do if I collect or manage personal data as part of my job?

You will need to make the individuals concerned aware that the information is being stored and say how it will be used and only use the information for that purpose.

Think about Data Protection before releasing personal data to a party outside of College. For example, parents of students have no automatic right to information concerning the student. If you are unsure about releasing data contact the Central Secretariat.

Always remember to use appropriate security controls to protect personal data from unauthorised access, such as encryption. Paper records containing personal data should always be disposed of as confidential waste. Similarly, personal data stored electronically should be erased using a method that prevents the information from being recovered.

Records Management

Underpinning compliance with Information legislation is good records management. Effective records management ensures that the information which Imperial College needs as evidence of what it does is created and maintained appropriately. Records management enhances business continuity, accountability, compliancy and overall efficiency. Additionally, good records management helps us to identify records of historical importance which are kept permanently as archives.