

Freedom of Information Procedure

Acquire Learning

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DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Procedure Owner	Registrar
Parent Document	Transparency and Public Information Policy
Approving Body	Approved under delegated authority in accordance with the Transparency and Public Information Policy.
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Equality Impact Assessment Completed	Covered by parent Policy
Who This Document Applies To	All members of staff responsible for receiving, considering, responding to or recording requests for information made to the College on behalf of applicants, students, staff, governors, regulators, awarding partners or members of the public

REGULATORY CONTEXT AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Category	Reference / Detail
Supporting Legislation	• UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) • Data Protection Act 2018 • Freedom of Information Act 2000 (where applicable)
Related Documents	• Data Protection Policy • Privacy Notice • Subject Access Request Procedure

VERSION CONTROL HISTORY

Version	Date	Author	Approved By	Summary of Changes
1.0	July 2026	Registrar	Registrar (under delegated authority)	Initial Procedure approved. Developed to establish the operational arrangements for receiving, considering, responding to and recording requests for information in accordance with the Transparency and Public Information Policy.

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A Note to Readers

This Freedom of Information Procedure explains how Acquire Learning College (from now on the College) receives, considers, responds to and records requests for information made by applicants, students, staff, governors, regulators, awarding partners and members of the public.

If you are requesting information from the College, this Procedure explains how requests should be submitted, how they will be considered and how the College will communicate its response.

If you are a member of staff responsible for receiving or responding to requests for information, this Procedure establishes the operational arrangements that support the College's Transparency and Public Information Policy. It explains how requests should be recorded, assessed, coordinated and responded to consistently.

This Procedure should be read alongside the Transparency and Public Information Policy. It does not apply to requests made by individuals seeking access to their own personal data, which are managed separately under the College's Subject Access Request arrangements. This Procedure reflects the College's commitment to openness and transparency. It should not be interpreted as creating statutory obligations beyond those that apply to the College under applicable legislation.

The College is committed to openness and transparency wherever this is appropriate and lawful. Information will normally be provided unless there is a legitimate reason for withholding or restricting disclosure.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to establish the operational arrangements through which the College receives, considers and responds to requests for information.

The Procedure supports the College's commitment to openness, transparency and accountability by ensuring that requests are managed consistently, fairly and within appropriate timescales. It also provides an auditable framework for recording requests, decisions and responses.

This Procedure supports the implementation of the Transparency and Public Information Policy and should be read alongside that Policy and the College's wider information governance framework.

Although the College is not generally subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as a public authority, it is committed to considering requests for information in a manner consistent with the principles of openness, transparency and accountability. This Procedure establishes the College's internal arrangements for doing so.

2. Scope

This Procedure applies to requests for recorded information held by or on behalf of the College that are not already routinely available through the College's published information.

It applies to requests received from applicants, students, staff, governors, regulators, awarding partners, members of the public and any other individual or organisation seeking information about the College.

This Procedure applies regardless of whether the request is received by email, letter or any other recognised communication channel.

Requests by individuals seeking access to their own personal data are outside the scope of this Procedure and will be managed through the College's Subject Access Request process in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

This Procedure does not apply to routine requests for information already published by the College, internal operational enquiries, complaints, appeals or requests made through other established College procedures.

3. Receiving Requests for Information

Requests for information should be submitted to the College using the published contact details available on the College website or through any other official communication channel.

Any member of staff receiving a request for information shall forward it promptly to the Registrar, who is responsible for coordinating the College's response.

Upon receipt of a request, the Registrar shall:

- record the request within the College's Information Request Register;
- acknowledge receipt where appropriate;
- determine whether the information requested is already publicly available;
- determine whether the request falls within the scope of this Procedure or should instead be managed through another College process, including the Subject Access Request process; and
- identify the relevant document owner or members of staff required to assist in preparing the response.
- determine whether the request should be referred to another College procedure.

The receipt of a request does not necessarily require the College to disclose the requested information. Each request shall be considered on its individual merits, taking account of the College's legal obligations, contractual commitments and the principles established within the Transparency and Public Information Policy.

4. Considering Requests

Following receipt of a request, the Registrar shall determine how the request should be managed and whether the requested information can be provided.

In considering a request, the College will have regard to:

- whether the information is already publicly available;
- whether the information is held by or on behalf of the College;
- whether disclosure would be consistent with the College's legal, regulatory or contractual obligations;

- whether the information contains personal data, commercially confidential information or legally privileged material;
- whether consultation with another member of staff, document owner or external organisation is required before a response is issued; and
- whether any part of the requested information can be disclosed where full disclosure is not appropriate.

Where clarification is required, the College may contact the requester before progressing the request. The period taken to obtain clarification will not be treated as part of the normal response timescale.

The College will seek to adopt a presumption of openness wherever this is consistent with its legal obligations and the principles established within the Transparency and Public Information Policy. However, disclosure will not take place where it would be unlawful or where there is a legitimate reason for withholding the information.

Where information is already publicly available, the College may direct the requester to the relevant publication rather than reproduce information that has already been made accessible.

5. Responding to Requests

The College will respond to requests as soon as reasonably practicable and will seek to provide clear and helpful responses.

Responses may include:

- disclosure of the requested information;
- partial disclosure where only part of the information can appropriately be released;
- an explanation that the requested information is already publicly available together with details of where it may be accessed;
- a request for further clarification where the scope of the request is unclear; or
- a refusal to disclose information where there is a lawful or legitimate reason for doing so.

Where information cannot be disclosed, the College will normally explain the reason for the decision unless doing so would itself disclose protected information.

Where only part of the requested information can be released, the College will disclose as much information as is reasonably practicable whilst protecting information that should not be disclosed.

The College will seek to ensure that responses are accurate, complete and understandable, and that information is provided in a format appropriate to the circumstances wherever reasonably practicable.

6. Review of Decisions

Where a requester is dissatisfied with the College's response, they may request that the decision is reviewed.

Requests for review should normally be submitted within twenty working days wherever reasonably practicable. of the original response and should explain the reasons why the requester believes the response should be reconsidered.

The review will normally be undertaken by a senior member of staff who was not responsible for the original decision, wherever this is reasonably practicable.

The review will consider:

- whether this Procedure has been followed appropriately;
- whether all relevant information was considered;
- whether the reasons for withholding or disclosing information were appropriate;
- whether any additional information can properly be disclosed; and
- whether the original response should be confirmed, amended or replaced.

The outcome of the review will be communicated to the requester as soon as reasonably practicable together with the reasons for the decision.

7. Record Keeping and Monitoring

The Registrar is responsible for maintaining appropriate records relating to requests for information received under this Procedure.

The College will maintain an Information Request Register recording, where appropriate:

- the date the request was received;
- the nature of the request;
- the area responsible for providing information;
- the outcome of the request;
- the date the response was issued; and
- any request for review and its outcome.

Records will be retained in accordance with the College's approved records management arrangements and applicable data protection legislation.

The Registrar will monitor requests received under this Procedure to identify recurring themes, opportunities to improve proactive publication and any issues requiring amendments to the Transparency and Public Information Policy or associated guidance.

This Procedure will normally be reviewed alongside the Transparency and Public Information Policy, or earlier where changes to legislation, regulatory requirements or institutional practice make an earlier review necessary.