Information Legislation & Management Survey 2008

JISC infoNet
May 2009
Results from the JISC infoNet/UUK/GuildHE Information Legislation & Management Survey 2008 based on 70 returns

1. Institution details

Q.2. What type of institution do you represent?

Q.3. In which country is your institution located?
Q.4. Approximately how many full time equivalent (FTE) students does your institution have?

![Bar chart showing the number of FTE students in different enrollment categories from Under 1k to Over 35k.](chart.png)
2. Requests

2.1. Definitions

Q.5. How does your institution define an FOI request (i.e. on what basis do you decide whether or not to record a request received)?

A. All requests received for information not included in our publication scheme
B. Any request for recorded information received in written form
C. Only requests which specifically state that it is an FOI request
D. Requests for information that are considered ‘non-standard’ or ‘non-routine’
E. Rely on FOISA s.8 definition (Scottish institutions only)
F. Other

Classification of FOI request

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2. Volume of requests

Q.6. According to the above definition, how many FOI or EIR requests or Data Protection Act (DPA) Subject Access Requests have you received during the following months:

FOI

Total volume of FOI requests received per month during 2008

Average No. of FOI requests received per institution per month during 2008
Trend in mean average No. of FOI requests per institution per month

![Graph showing the trend in mean average No. of FOI requests per institution per month.](image)

**EIR**

Total volume of EIR requests received per month during 2008

![Bar chart showing the total volume of EIR requests received per month during 2008.](image)
Average No. of EIR requests received per institution per month during 2008

Trend in mean average No. of EIR requests per institution per month
Total volume of DPA SAR requests received per month during 2008

Average No. of DPA SAR requests received per institution per month during 2008
Comparison

Comparison of average No. of FOI requests received per institution per month

* Note: Figures for November and December 2005 were not collected
Q.7. Of the total number of FOI and EIR requests received how many have resulted in the following responses:

**Responses to total requests received**

- **Disclosed in full**: 59%
- **Disclosed in part**: 17%
- **Fully withheld due to an exemption(s)**: 8%
- **Information not known/not recorded**: 3%
- **Request refused due to it being too broad to be meaningful**: 1%
- **Request refused as being repeated / vexatious**: 0%
- **Withheld due to a fee being charged but not received**: 0%
- **Request refused due to information not being held**: 6%
- **Other**: 6%
- **Request refused due to it being repeated / vexatious**: 0%
- **Request refused due to it being too broad to be meaningful**: 1%
- **Withheld due to a fee being charged but not received**: 0%
- **Request refused due to information not being held**: 6%
- **Other**: 6%
- **Fully withheld due to an exemption(s)**: 8%

**Comparison of trends in disclosure rates**

- **2005**: Fully disclosed (63%), Disclosed in part (18%), Fully withheld (12%)
- **2006**: Fully disclosed (62%), Disclosed in part (18%), Fully withheld (7%)
- **2007**: Fully disclosed (62%), Disclosed in part (18%), Fully withheld (7%)
- **2008**: Fully disclosed (59%), Disclosed in part (17%), Fully withheld (8%)
2.3. Types of request

Q.8. How many of the requests you have received have cited the following specific legislation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Requests</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOI</td>
<td>2078</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIR</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 2680 requests (58.5% of all categories of requests received)

Q.9. How many requests have you received which have been 'mixed' requests (i.e. which have required handling under more than one piece of information access legislation)?

93 mixed requests received

Q.10. Of the total number of requests received which you have dealt with under FOI how many have related to the following subject areas: (if a request covers more than one of the areas outlined below please record it under the principal subject area)

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total No. of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not known/recorded</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estates and buildings</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and assessment</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal research</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other research</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertations and theses</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and admin</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement issues</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR and staff issues</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student issues</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial information</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT provision and use</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial activities</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
2.4. Types of requester

Q.11. Of the FOI & EIR requests you have received since January 2008 how many have been from each of the following categories of requester. Please provide separate figures for FOI and EIR:

FOI

*Note: Figures for ‘student issues’ were not collected in 2005. Figures for ‘IT provision & use’ and ‘Commercial activities’ were only collected from 2007.
**EIR**

**Total No. of EIR requests received by type of requester**

*Note: Figures for ‘Trade Unions’ were not collected in 2005. Figures for ‘MPs/political parties’ were collected in 2008 only.*

**Comparison**

**Comparison of total No. of FOI requests received by type of requester**

*Note: Figures for ‘Trade Unions’ were not collected in 2005. Figures for ‘MPs/political parties’ were collected in 2008 only.*
2.5. Responding to requests

Q.12. If you routinely record the amount of time it takes to answer an FOI/EIR request or DPA SAR please indicate how many requests have taken the following periods of time to complete. (Including forwarding/logging of request, identifying and locating relevant information, considering exemptions, redacting/preparing information for release, internal approval process for release).

If you do not record this information, please indicate which of the following lengths of time you feel that the majority of requests have taken to answer.

FOI/EIR

How long FOI & EIR requests take to answer (actual time spent)
How long FOI & EIR requests take to answer (total time elapsed)

- Less than 1 hour: 30%
- Between 1 and 4 hours (i.e. up to 0.5 days): 47%
- Between 4 and 8 hours (i.e. between 0.5 and 1 day): 8%
- Between 1 and 5 days: 7%
- Between 5 and 10 days: 3%
- Between 10 and 15 days: 2%
- Between 15 and 20 days: 0%
- Between 20 and 40 days: 3%
- Between 40 and 60 days: 0%
- Between 60 and 90 days: 0%
- Between 90 and 120 days: 0%
- Between 120 and 240 days: 0%
- Between 240 and 365 days: 0%
- More than 365 days: 0%

How long DPA SAR requests take to answer (actual time spent)

- Less than 1 hour: 30%
- Between 1 and 4 hours (i.e. up to 0.5 days): 47%
- Between 4 and 8 hours (i.e. between 0.5 and 1 day): 8%
- Between 1 and 5 days: 7%
- Between 5 and 10 days: 3%
- Between 10 and 15 days: 2%
- Between 15 and 20 days: 0%
- Between 20 and 40 days: 3%
- Between 40 and 60 days: 0%
- Between 60 and 90 days: 0%
- Between 90 and 120 days: 0%
- Between 120 and 240 days: 0%
- Between 240 and 365 days: 0%
- More than 365 days: 0%
Q.13 How many FOI or EIR requests did you receive during 2008 which you did not complete within 20 working days?

116 requests out of a total of 3581 (3.2%) received were not completed within 20 working days

Of those 116, 15 (0.4%) were caused by extensions to the deadline to allow for consideration of the public interest test

Q.14. How many DPA subject access requests did you receive during 2008 which you did not complete within 40 days?

24 Subject Access Requests out of a total of 1002 (2.3%) were not completed within 40 days
Q.15. Please rank the steps below in order of the amount of time they usually take when completing an FOI or EIR request (ranging from 1 = longest time to complete to 7 = shortest time to complete)

**Time taken to officially log an FOI/EIR request**

- Extremely long: 12%
- Very long: 3%
- Long: 5%
- Average: 0%
- Quick: 7%
- Very quick: 12%
- Extremely quick: 61%

**Time taken identifying relevant information sources**

- Extremely long: 0%
- Very long: 14%
- Long: 12%
- Average: 10%
- Quick: 15%
- Very quick: 49%
- Extremely quick: 0%
Time taken locating & accessing required information

- Extremely long: 46%
- Very long: 15%
- Long: 12%
- Average: 5%
- Quick: 12%
- Very quick: 3%
- Extremely quick: 7%

Time taken reviewing the information

- Extremely long: 17%
- Very long: 27%
- Long: 12%
- Average: 32%
- Quick: 7%
- Very quick: 3%
- Extremely quick: 2%
Time taken considering exemptions

- Extremely quick: 7%
- Very long: 17%
- Very quick: 15%
- Long: 24%
- Average: 10%
- Quick: 10%
- Extremely long: 17%

Time taken obtaining internal approval for decisions taken

- Extremely quick: 7%
- Very long: 15%
- Very quick: 7%
- Long: 14%
- Average: 27%
- Quick: 22%
- Extremely long: 17%
- Long: 10%
Q.16. On average, how many members of staff are actively involved in responding to an FOI, EIR or DPA request?

Average No. of staff involved in responding to FOI requests

- 2-3 staff: 65%
- 1 staff: 22%
- More than 5: 0%
- 4-5 staff: 13%
- 1 staff: 22%
- More than 5: 0%
- 4-5 staff: 13%
- Very quick: 15%
- Quick: 27%
- Average: 17%
- Long: 22%
- Very long: 7%
- Extremely long: 0%
- Extremely quick: 12%

Time taken redacting information

- Extremely quick: 12%
- Very quick: 15%
- Quick: 27%
- Average: 17%
- Long: 22%
- Very long: 7%
- Extremely long: 0%
Q.17. How many FOI or EIR requests did you receive during 2008 for which you charged a fee?

16 out of 3581 requests (0.45%) which were either answered partially or in full resulted in a fee being charged.

Q.18. How many FOI or EIR requests did you receive during 2008 for which you charged for disbursements?

8 out of 3581 requests (0.22%) which were either answered partially or in full resulted in disbursements being charged.
Q.19. During 2008 how many DPA subject access requests did you charge a £10 fee for?

481 out of 1002 Subject Access Requests (48.0%) required payment of a £10 fee.

Q.20. Do you publish the FOI or EIR requests you have received and the answers/information you have given (e.g. in the form of a disclosure log)?

6 institutions do publish the information they provide

37 institutions do not

Reasons stated for not implementing a Disclosure Log

- Limited value does not justify resources required (56%)
- It is not mandatory (24%)
- Unaware of Disclosure Logs (0%)
- One is planned but not yet implemented (2%)
- Might encourage additional requests (3%)
- Other (15%)
2.6. Exemptions applied

Q.21. Since January 2008 how many times have you relied on the following exemptions to withhold information requested under FOI

Key to exemption numbers

21. Information accessible to applicant by other means.

22. Information intended for future publication.

23. Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters.


25. Certificates under ss. 23 and 24: supplementary provisions.
27. International relations.
28. Relations within the United Kingdom.
29. The economy.
30. Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities.
31. Law enforcement.
32. Court records, etc.
33. Audit functions.
34. Parliamentary privilege.
35. Formulation of government policy, etc.
36. Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs.
37. Communications with Her Majesty, etc. and honours.
38. Health and safety.
40. Personal information.
41. Information provided in confidence.
42. Legal professional privilege.
43. Commercial interests.
44. Prohibitions on disclosure.

**Comparison**

**Comparison of times each exemption has been used to withhold information under FOI**

![Comparison Graph](image-url)
2.7. Appeals process

Q.22. Since January 2008 how many requests for information which have been either partially or completely refused by the institution have subsequently been subject to an internal appeal

54 decisions to withhold information have been subject to an internal appeal (1.5% of all FOI/EIR requests received)

Of these:

43 Upheld by the internal appeal
7 Overruled by the internal appeal
3 Decisions still pending

Q.23. How many requests since January 2008 have been the subject of external appeal (i.e. involving the Office of the Information Commissioner, Scottish Information Commissioner, the Information Tribunal or the Court of Session)?

15 decisions to withhold information have been the subject of external appeal (0.42% of all FOI/EIR requests received)

How many of these decisions to refuse a request, either partially or completely, were:

3 Upheld completely by the external appeal
2 Upheld in part by the external appeal
1 Overruled by the external appeal

Q.24. How many times since January 2008 have you sought formal legal advice when responding to a request or appeal?

Legal advice has been sought on 31 occasions regarding FOI matters
22 times regarding DPA issues and 1 time regarding the EIR
3. Staffing Issues

Q.25. Do you have an officially designated FOI Officer and/or team?

45 (64%) Yes

Q.26. If so, approximately what equivalent FTE resource is devoted to FOI issues (please note this can be more than 1.0 FTE if more than one person is employed in this area)?

![FTE resource devoted to FOI & EIR issues](image)

4. Records Management

Q.27. Does your institution have an officially designated Records Manager and/or team?

39 (86.7%) Yes

6 (13.3%) No

Q.28. Do you have an approved records management policy in place?

36 (80%) Yes

9 (20%) No
Q.29. Which of the following best describes your institution’s approach to implementing an Electronic Document & Records Management System?

- We have successfully implemented one already: 4%
- We are in the process of implementing one: 18%
- We are planning to implement one in the near future: 7%
- We are considering whether to implement one: 29%
- We have no plans to implement one: 42%

Q.30 What use have you made of the data from previous iterations of this survey within your institution?

- General professional interest: 27%
- To benchmark our performance/experience against others: 23%
- To inform management of trends/impact: 23%
- To support requests for extra staffing/funding: 1%
- To inform presentations and training materials (internal audience): 15%
- To inform presentations and training materials (external audience): 3%
- Referenced in published papers: 1%
- Other: 3%
- None: 4%
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