

Varndean College



PUBLICATION SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

1. Legal requirement

- 1.1 Adopting a publication scheme is a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act promotes greater openness and accountability across the public sector by requiring all 'public authorities' to make information available proactively, through a publication scheme.
- 1.2 'Public authorities' are defined in the Act and include universities, further education colleges and sixth form colleges.

2. What is a publication scheme?

- 2.1 A publication scheme is a document which describes the information a public authority publishes, or intends to publish. In this context, 'publish' means to make information available, routinely. These descriptions are called 'classes of information'. The scheme is not a list of the actual publications, because this will change as new material is published or existing material revised. It is, however, the public authority's **commitment** to make available the information described.
- 2.2 A publication scheme must set out the classes, or categories, of information published. It must also make clear how the information described can be accessed and whether or not charges will be made.

3. The 'model' publication scheme for further education

- 3.1 Varndean College has adopted the model publication scheme developed for the Further Education sector and is therefore committed to publishing the information it describes.
- 3.2 This model is designed for sixth form colleges across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the model is to save institutions duplicating effort in producing individual schemes and to assist the public in accessing information from across the sector. However, to reflect the diversity in size and function of institution, a number of optional classes of information are included. As a result, models within the sector will vary slightly. Any optional classes relevant to us have been included in our scheme.
- 3.3 To assist with the development of the model, a number of institutions across the sector volunteered as pilots. Information about the pilot exercise is available from the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) website at:

www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mps_overview

4. Who we are

Varndean College is a broadly-based sixth form college in the northern suburbs of Brighton. There are 1100 full-time 16-18 year olds and 1800 adults, largely part-time. 85% of students live in the City of Brighton and Hove.

Most 16-18 year olds are taking advanced courses at AS, A2, AVCE or BTEC with a further 12% taking one year courses based mainly around the Intermediate GNVQ qualification. Adults take a wide range of courses including the full-time courses in Access to Higher Education and in Office Administration. Adult part-time courses on site focus on ICT, languages and counselling with extensive provision in six outreach centres mainly in East Brighton. The quality of provision is very good, particularly at A level, with the College being at or near the top of national value added tables.

www.varndean.ac.uk

5. Accessing information covered by the publication scheme

- 5.1 The classes of information we publish are described in the second part of the scheme.
- 5.2 Next to each class we have indicated the manner in which the information described will be available. We have also indicated whether charges apply to material in each class.
- 5.3 To request information available through our publication scheme, please contact: **Communications Officer**
- 5.4 Please note that a publication scheme relates to 'published' information. Therefore, material covered has already been prepared in a format ready for distribution.

6. What about information not covered by the publication scheme?

- 6.1 From 1 January 2005 you will have the right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request any information held by a public authority which it has not already made available through its publication scheme.
- 6.2 Requests will have to be made in writing and, in general, public authorities will have 20 working days to respond. They may charge a fee, which will have to be calculated according to Fees Regulations. They will not be required to release information to which an exemption in the Act legitimately applies. However, public authorities may be required to explain to the applicant why they are not releasing information and they may also have to justify this to the Information Commissioner.

7. Feedback

- 7.1 It is important that this publication scheme meets your needs. If you find the scheme difficult to understand, please let us know. We also welcome suggestions as to how our scheme might be improved. Any questions, comments or complaints about this scheme should be sent in writing to the Publication Scheme Co-ordinator below.

Communications Officer

Varndean College, Surrenden Road, BRIGHTON, East Sussex, BN1 6WQ

7.2 If we are unable to resolve any complaint, you can complain to the Information Commissioner, the independent body who oversees the Freedom of Information Act:

Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
t: 01625 545700 f: 01625 524510 e: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk w: informationcommissioner.gov.uk

8. Further information

More information about the Freedom of Information Act is available on the Information Commissioner's website at:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Please note that Scotland has its own Freedom of Information Act and Information Commissioner. For more information, please see the Scottish Executive's website at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/government/foi

1. Governance

Introduction

This section covers information relating to the way the College is governed and how decisions are made. It includes information on the legal status of the College, which individual member of staff or group within the organisation is responsible for specific functions and where they fit in the overall structure of the organisation. In some instances information from committee minutes will be exempt from disclosure where it contains personal information, information that may damage the commercial interests of the College or that may threaten the health and safety of specific individuals.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
1.1	Legal framework	<p>This class contains information relating to how the College was established and its standing from the point of view of the law. Ultimately the corporate status of some FE 'corporations' will be conferred by the relevant statutes, in particular the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The actual legislation is often already publicly available, for example on the HMSO web site (www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts.htm) and need not be duplicated.</p> <p>Every educational institution (university, further or higher education college) has a legal basis, which forms its legal status. This legal status can have been obtained in a variety of ways such as by instruments and articles of government, charter or an act of parliament.</p>	Paper	£10
1.2	How the College is organised	<p>This class contains information relating to how the individual units of the College are organised and where each unit fits in the overall structure of the College. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisational structure charts• Description of work/responsibilities of units	Paper	£10

1.3	Information on the institutional context	<p>This class should include information to be made available by FE corporations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College's mission statement • Relevant sections of the College's corporate plan • Statement of the College's quality assurance policies and procedures • The College's learning and teaching strategy and periodic reviews of progress <p>If some or all of the information listed above appears in another class(es), then cross-reference(s) to where in the publication scheme (PS) it appears should be included here.</p>	Web	Free
1.4	Management structure	<p>This class contains information relating to how the College's management structure is organised and the function and purpose of each part of the management structure. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of Statutory Bodies (e.g. Governing Body, Corporation). In many cases it will be appropriate to list the names of people who are members of the above, as they are matters of public interest • Codes of Conduct for members of governing bodies • Description of the sub-structures and committees supporting them. This may include Academic Boards, Boards of Governors and Steering Groups These may have 'Standing Orders' that indicate the mode of operation • Objectives on which the structure is based • Terms of reference, membership and mode of operation of all boards and committees in the formal structure • Code of practice for college elections and committee procedures • Minutes and papers of Governing Body, Corporation meetings and Steering Groups etc • Appointment committees and procedures 	Paper	£10

2. Financial Resources

Introduction

This section covers information on the College's strategy and management of financial resources. The Finance Division provides accounting, procurement and contracting services, helping to make best use of resources and fulfilling statutory responsibilities. Information that may damage the College's commercial interests will be excluded from publication.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
2.1	Finance	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include policies and procedures relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets and accounts • Contracting • Goods and services • Insurance • Pensions • Remuneration of senior staff as published in annual accounts • Travel and subsistence 	Paper	£10
2.2	Resource planning	<p>This class should include information that defines how the College undertakes its planning and resource allocation, how it regulates the deployment of resources and how it publishes the outcomes.</p> <p>Examples of the type of information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial regulations, including procurement policy • Annual accounts • Annual budget (as appears in the final accounts) • Planning and budgeting procedures • Corporate plan/Mission statement • Annual report 	Paper	£10 or Free

3. Human Resources

Introduction

This section covers information on the College's strategy and management of human resources, rather than information relating to individual members of staff which is exempt from disclosure as personal information. The information available covers personnel policies and procedures (including terms and conditions of service including all current versions of the information specified in each class).

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
3.1	Employment and employee relations	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to recruitment • Generic terms and conditions of employment • Salary grades • Collective bargaining procedures and consultation with recognised trade unions and professional organisations, and agreements reached • Grievance procedures and policies • Disciplinary procedures and policies • Harassment and bullying policy • Health and safety policy and procedures • Public interest disclosure (for compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act) • Job vacancies • Any other policies relating to staff not included elsewhere in the PS 	<p>Paper</p> <p>Web</p>	<p>£10</p> <p>Free</p>
3.2	Equal opportunities /Diversity	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to the provision of equal opportunities with respect to age, race/ethnic origin, gender, religion and belief, sexual orientation, and disability • Race Relations/Race Equality Policies, as required under the Race Relations Amendment Act of 2000 	<p>Paper</p> <p>Web</p>	<p>£10</p> <p>Free</p>
3.3	Staff development	<p>This class should include information on staff development and training, including induction programmes, probation and appraisal. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction – details of areas covered and procedures • Policies and procedures relating to probation • Policies and procedures pertaining to appraisal • Policies and procedures relating to the on-going development of staff, including schemes such as Investors in People • Policies on upgrades and promotions 	<p>Paper</p>	<p>£10</p>

4. Physical Resources

Introduction

Colleges are often substantial land and property owners in their own right. Classes in this section cover information at a strategic level relating to the College's management of its physical resources. Information that provides specific details of the College's future plans to alter its estate (e.g. proposals to purchase additional property) may be exempt from disclosure where such disclosure would damage the College's commercial interests.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
4.1	Estates	Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estates strategy and plan• Tendering policies• Catering policies• Cleaning policies• Grounds maintenance and upkeep• Building maintenance and upkeep• Recycling policies• Disposal policies• Map of main site• Address of main site and any other locations	Paper	£10

5. Student Administration and Support

Introduction

This section contains information on how the College manages the administration and progression of their students from admission to course completion, including student support services. Information available within this section does not include specific student personal details, by virtue of being personal information.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
5.1	Information on student admission, progression and completion	<p>This class should include information recommended to be made available by the Cooke report under this heading (as above):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student qualifications on entry • The range of student entrants classified by age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability and geographical origin as returned to LSC • Student progression, retention and completion data • Data on qualifications awarded to students • Data on employment/training outcomes for graduates/students <p>If some or all of the information listed above appears in another class(es) then cross-reference(s) to where it appears in the PS should be included here.</p>	<p>Paper</p> <p>Web</p>	<p>£10</p> <p>Free</p>
5.2	Student accommodation	<p>This class should include information relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation services 	N/A	
5.3	Student administration	<p>This class should include information relating to all areas of the maintenance of individual student records, including policies and procedures covering the management of the student records system itself, and the division of responsibilities between central registry staff, College staff and the students themselves. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registry student records policies and procedures documents • Registry security and data protection policy and procedure documents 	Web	Free

5.4	Student admission and enrolment	<p>This class should include information relating to the admission/enrolment of new students, including policies and procedures covering the assessment of external qualifications, the creation of student records, the coordination of student funding arrangements and the division of responsibilities between central admissions or equivalent and College staff. An example of the type of information in this class is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions and enrolment policies and procedures documents 	Paper	£10 or Free
5.5	Student discipline	<p>This class should include information relating to the conduct of disciplinary proceedings against students. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of student discipline and other policy and procedure documents • Internal student complaint and appeals procedures 	Paper Web	£10 Free
5.6	Student learning support services	<p>This class should include information on student support services from an academic and learning perspective, particularly those not covered under Information Services. This will also likely appear in the Student Handbook and Prospectus in some form. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning development and support • Personal development advice • Services for students with special needs 	Paper	£10 or Free
5.7	Student liaison	<p>This class should include information relating to the structure and functioning of staff/student consultative committees or other liaison groups. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference of staff/student liaison committee(s) • Minutes of previous staff/student liaison committee(s) meetings 	Paper	£10
5.8	Student policies	<p>This class should include a guide to all student policies issued by the College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies relating to students not included elsewhere in the PS • Reference to student policies included elsewhere in the PS 	Paper	£10

5.9	Student welfare	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare/advice services • Health services • Careers services • Sports and recreational facilities • Housing • Finance <p><i>Note. At Varndean, much of this information is published as part of a Student Handbook</i></p>	Paper	£10
5.10	Student Associations and Activities	<p>This class should contain information relating to the operation and activities of the Students' Union and other clubs, associations and non-academic activities that are organised for or by the students. Examples of information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Union Constitution, Code of Practice, List of Officers and any other related documents 	Paper	£10

6. Information Services

Introduction

This section covers those functions within the College that provide access to information to the student body and both academic and administrative staff. These include libraries, computing services and information support services.

Such functions may be managed separately from each other, or in various combinations. These services routinely explain their facilities (and the conditions of their use) to students, staff and the general public, and it is information of this nature that is included within this section.

Information services inevitably hold large quantities of personal data that are exempt from general disclosure.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
6.1	Availability and conditions of use of facilities	<p>Information in these classes provides details about who can access systems and services and the facilities that they can access. They also provide assurance for external bodies/individuals that rules exist to ensure that breaches of conditions of use (e.g. breach of copyright, email spamming of an external site) are appropriately dealt with.</p> <p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening hours of libraries, helpdesks, etc., scheduled maintenance times of systems • Who is allowed to use the facilities (for example, categories of persons and their associated rights/levels of access) • The general rules and conditions of use (e.g. no smoking/drinking/eating, the existence of policies with regard to law such as copyright, computing code of practice, data protection). For other student policies, see reference to other relevant student policies in PS • Some of the information may be covered in the student registration details or staff conditions of employment, but it will be necessary to advise how other categories are accepted as users, e.g. temporary staff, short course or conference use, 'taster sessions' etc • There should be a pointer to other codes of conduct or rules external to the College which may apply to the user (e.g. JANET acceptable use rules, Athens registration rules) • Access to/use of Archives, including how far back in time information exists and if so to what extent it is available¹ <p>¹Information covered by the Data Protection Act will be retained for seven years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of logging, monitoring and procedures followed in case of breach of conditions of use 	Paper	£10

		should also be included here		
6.2	Mission statements and related documents	This class should include information regarding the aims of the department in context of its place in the organisation, a definition of the service provided and, where appropriate, service level agreements.	Web	Free
6.3	Policies with regard to data and information	<p>Information in this class offers assurances to data subjects, whether they are individuals or companies that deal with the College, that data relating to them is being handled well, minimising the risk of unauthorised access or disclosure. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security policies (i.e. how the data is protected). It could be argued that provision of information on this could risk a crime being committed, so it might be exempt or certain parts would not be published. (This is only really an issue where the security policy is explicit enough to include detailed description of implementation. Clearly disclosure of this sort of information could potentially lead to a crime under the Computer Misuse Act) • Data retention and archive policies (how long it is kept for, what happens to it after the need for it has passed, anonymising data to keep for statistics) • Data protection statements/policies • Policies on CCTV monitoring, RIPA etc. 	Paper	£10
6.4	Procurement and disposal policies	<p>Information in this class offers assurances that monies are being appropriately spent and assurances that procurement is fair and open. The disposal policies also assure that the College is making correct and appropriate use of funds.</p> <p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies relating to the procurement and disposal of equipment • Collection management/preservation strategy (including policy on disposal of stock) 	Paper	£10
6.5	Scope of collections held	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides to collections • Scope and availability of catalogues 	N/A	

7. Teaching and Learning

Introduction

This section contains information regarding the management of teaching and learning within the College including mechanisms for reviewing and ensuring the quality of teaching provided. (Colleges may be required to make available much of the information included within this section as part of the recommendations of the *Information on quality and standards in higher education* ('Cooke Report') see above.)

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
7.1	Academic year dates	This class should include information on the dates for the current academic year as well as future academic years (as far as is known).	Paper Web	£10 Free
7.2	Further course information	This class should include information relating to particular schools and departments, also information relating to programmes and qualifications. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term dates • Structure of courses • Qualification gained • Changing courses • Work experience 	Paper Web	£10 or Free Free
7.3	Information on internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards	This class should include information about the College's internal quality audit programmes and annual review. It should also include information on the College's internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards. Examples of the type of information in this class include: <p>a) Information on programme approval, monitoring and review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme specifications • Annual monitoring and review processes • Accreditation and monitoring reports by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies <p>b) Information on assessment procedures and outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment strategies, processes and procedures • The range and nature of student work <p>c) Information on student satisfaction with their college experience, covering the views of students on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for academic and tutorial guidance, support and supervision • Library services and IT support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability of accommodation, equipment and 	Paper	£10

		<p>facilities for teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of the quality of teaching and the range of teaching and learning methods • Assessment arrangements • Quality of pastoral support <p>d) Information and evidence available to teams undertaking internal reviews of quality and standards in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of teaching and learning, in relation to programme aims and curriculum content as they evolve over time • The range of teaching methods used • The availability and use of specialist equipment and other resources and materials to support teaching and learning • Staff access to professional development to improve teaching performance, including peer observation and mentoring programmes • The use of external benchmarking and other comparators 		
7.4	Staffing structure of departments	<p>This class should include information about staff roles within departments, together with organisational charts. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job titles of academic staff and support staff • Contact details for each department 	Paper	£10
7.5	Student assessment strategy	<p>This class should include information on the regulations and/or policy governing student assessment. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination periods • Examination regulations • Appeal procedures • Policy on plagiarism • External examination bodies 	Paper Web	£10 Free
7.6	Tuition fees	<p>This class should include information relating to tuition fees for UK students, EU students and other international students, including information on when tuition fees will be payable and how to pay. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for home/EU students • Information for international student • Information on other charges 	Web	Free

8. External Relations

Introduction

This section covers information relating to the College's relationship with its external environment. These include the formal reports the College is required to provide to its funding bodies, arrangements with other colleges, how it manages its relationship with the local community and how it retains contact with its former staff and students.

By virtue of its nature most colleges will probably find that the majority of these classes are already made available to the public in some means. Members of the public are also likely to find the same or related information is available from the external partners with which the College has links.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
8.1	Community liaison	<p>This class should contain information about the College's relationship with their local community. The information included within this class represents the College's approach to maintaining and fostering that relationship. An example of the type of information in this class is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies relating to the College's community relations 	Paper	£10
8.2	Fundraising	<p>Information included within this class relates to the activities undertaken by the College to raise additional revenue to that provided by its main funding bodies. An examples of the type of information in this class is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional material relating to College fundraising objectives including plans, prospectus etc, where their release would not damage the commercial interests of the College 	Paper	£10
8.3	Government and Regulator relations	<p>This class relates to the information that the College is legally obliged to make available to its funding and/or monitoring bodies. Such material may provide information as to how well the College is performing. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports/returns to funding councils, inspectorates, standards bodies, research councils, professional bodies, government departments etc • OFSTED Inspections (for FE), Teaching Quality Assessment and Research Assessment Exercise Policies (see also Teaching and Learning) 	<p>Paper</p> <p>Web</p>	<p>£10</p> <p>Free</p>

