

Freedom of Information Policy

Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 North Devon College is committed to openness and transparency in its operation and to fully discharging its obligations in respect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated legislation.
- 1.2 Information to be made accessible includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs and sound or video recordings.
- 1.3 All requesters for information will be treated equally.
- 1.4 The College cannot release all the information it holds. A decision by the college to withhold information will be based on reasons relating to data protection, confidentiality, health, and safety or safeguarding.
- 1.5 The Freedom of Information Policy applies to all members of staff, contractors and suppliers working for or on behalf of North Devon College.

Definitions

- 1.6 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) provides the public with the right to access information held by public authorities.
- 1.7 North Devon College is a public authority as defined by the Act.

Policy

- 1.8 According to the FOIA s19 every public authority must
 - publish information in accordance with its publication scheme
 - review its publication scheme from time to time
 - North Devon College has adopted the model publication scheme approved by the ICO.
- 1.9 The information The College publishes covers
 - who we are and what we do
 - what we spend and how we spend it
 - what our priorities are
 - how we make decisions
 - policies
 - services we offer
- 1.10 Information that is not available through the website can be requested.

Policy Name: Freedom of Information Policy	Policy No: P27004
Approved Date: July 2025	Review Date: July 2027
Approved by: Executive Team/Full Governing Body	EqIA Completed: Yes
Author: Director of Governance/DPO	Monitoring and Evaluation: Full Governing Body

A valid request under the FOIA should be

- in writing via email to foi@petroc.ac.uk or by post to DPO, North Devon College, Old Sticklepath Hill, Sticklepath, Barnstaple, EX31 2BQ.
- include a name and address (email address is sufficient) to enable correspondence
- details setting out the information requested

Responses

- 1.11 North Devon College will respond to a request within 20 working days following the receipt of the request. In cases where we are unable to provide the requested information within this time frame, we will provide an explanation and request an extension. Where the College holds the requested information, it will be released, provided it is not exempt from disclosure under the FOIA or there is any other reason as set out under 1.4 above.
- 1.12 North Devon College will respond to requests for environmental information held within 20 working days in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Implementation

- 1.13 All Information Asset Owners (and/or post holders responsible for specific types of information) are responsible for ensuring the records they manage are accurate and complete, and that all requests are handled efficiently and promptly.
- 1.14 Responsibility for the publication of information relating to strategy, policy and performance rests with the Executive Team.
- 1.15 Responsibility for the publication of information relating to governance rests with the Director of Governance.
- 1.16 Responsibility for the remainder of website content rests with the Head of Marketing and Communications.
- 1.17 Responsibility for processing requests for information which is not routinely published, and maintaining the disclosure log, rests with the Data Protection Officer.
- 1.18 Responsibility for authorising the release of information which is not routinely published rests with Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)
- 1.19 If North Devon College does not hold the requested information, we will inform the requester of this in writing.
- 1.20 If North Devon College considers a FOI request is subject to an exemption, considerations around whether the requested information can be disclosed will take account of
- the public interest
 - rights of data subjects
 - legal and contractual obligations
 - issues of information access and security

Policy Name: Freedom of Information Policy	Policy No: P27004
Approved Date: July 2025	Review Date: July 2027
Approved by: Executive Team/Full Governing Body	EqIA Completed: Yes
Author: Director of Governance/DPO	Monitoring and Evaluation: Full Governing Body

- 1.21 The college will only withhold information according to exemptions set out by legislation and as per guidance provided by the ICO.

Comments and complaints about the handling of a Freedom of Information request can be sent to the DPO by email DPO@petroc.ac.uk or by post to DPO, North Devon College, Old Sticklepath Hill, Sticklepath, Barnstaple, EX31 2BQ and will be responded to within 20 working days in most cases, or 40 in exceptional circumstances.

Routinely published information is made available via the College's website free of charge. Where a request is received for a hard copy of information, which is routinely published electronically, the College will advise the requester within 20 working days if a charge is applicable.

Where requests are received for information, which is not routinely published, the College will advise the requester within 20 working days if a charge is applicable. Any charge made will be within the range permissible by the fee regulations in force at the time that the request is made. No charge will be made for transcribing information into an accessible format.

Associated Documentation

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Petroc Publication Scheme
- GDPR Policy
- Data Retention Policy

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

1. The Executive Team is responsible for recommending the Freedom of Information Policy.
2. The Board is responsible for approving and adopting the Freedom of Information Policy.
3. The Freedom of Information Policy will be reviewed by the DPO bi-annually or if any changes in the law occur.

Policy Name: Freedom of Information Policy	Policy No: P27004
Approved Date: July 2025	Review Date: July 2027
Approved by: Executive Team/Full Governing Body	EqIA Completed: Yes
Author: Director of Governance/DPO	Monitoring and Evaluation: Full Governing Body