Publication Scheme Staff Training

Introduction

A Publication Scheme ('PS') is simply a way to provide easy and automatic access standard types of information about a public body. It is aimed primarily at members of the public, although staff and students have access to it as well. The University already publishes a large amount of information, and the PS doesn't affect, or supersede, any other sources of University information.

Why do we have a Publication Scheme?

Section 23 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 ('FOISA') requires that all Scottish public authorities must have, and must maintain, a PS. It must be approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner ('SIC'), and it must specify the classes of information published by the public authority and what is available. It is part of the University's external website.

Model Publication Schemes

Section 24 of FOISA provides for the possibility of a 'model' PS. These are standardised PSs and they apply across particular sectors, for example higher education. If a public body adopts such a PS without any changes, this will be the same as all other Universities which adopt it, and no further approval from the SIC is required. This is what the University has.

Why is there training on the Publication Scheme?

The SIC has required training for those who may be in contact with anyone who might request information from the PS.

Content of the Publication Scheme

There is compulsory text, called the 'Guide to Information available through the Model Publication Scheme', on its front page.

Within this, there are specified categories of information which must be published (or made available on request) under the following headings:

8.1 General Information
8.2 Access to Information and Records Management Policies
8.3 Governance
8.4 Financial Resources
8.5 Corporate Planning
8.6 Procurement
8.7 Management of Research
8.8 Commercialisation and Knowledge Transfer

8.9 Human Resources
8.10 Physical Resources
8.11 Health and Safety
8.12 Equality and Diversity
8.13 Support for Disabled People
8.14 Student Administration and Support
8.15 Teaching Quality
8.16 information Services (A&B)
8.17 External and Community Relations
8.18 Government and Regulator Relations
8.19 Open data
8.20 Complaints
8.21 Academic Appeals
8.22 Academic Regulations

Management of the Publication Scheme

This is done by the Compliance Officer in the Corporate Governance team within Academic Registry. The PS is regularly reviewed and updated.

Availability and Accessibility

The PS is prominent, and easily navigated, on the University's external webpages, as it is required to be. There are some specific regulatory requirements below.

Possible tasks for staff

The SIC requires that a paper copy of the 'Guide to Information available through the Model Publication Scheme' webpage can be requested from the authority's main customer contact and that there is a target for responding. Please be aware of this: all that is needed is to print out the relevant page at and send it to the requester, or to provide a link to it electronically. The deadline for doing so is 5 working days and please keep a record (but the absolute maximum is 20 working days which is the normal maximum for responding to a FOI request).

Staff awareness points

The SIC requires that staff responding to calls, emails and letters to the main customer contact centre need to know the authority operates a PS; where to find the Guide to Information, that they can provide a paper copy in response to a request for the 'Guide' or other documents actually published in the PS, and the target timescale for response.

Information available from the Publication Scheme on request

The University has an obligation to help provide information to members of the public, but not every piece of information falling under a heading in the PS has been made available on the website.

This is because some documents may have personal information, or other information which the University would need to withhold, for example if it is commercially sensitive, and would fall under one of the exemptions in FOISA. There is therefore a need to review and if

necessary to redact all documents before disclosure. Please refer to the Corporate Governance team in Academic Registry to check if anything needs to be redacted.

Charges

There are certain circumstances in which a charge may be levied by the University for providing information. The University's charging policy is on the PS page for the 'Guide to Information available through the Model Publication Scheme'.

Generally speaking, information which is already published in the PS website is free of charge to anyone.

Alternative formats

The University has obligations under both equality legislation and information legislation to provide these (eg in Braille; audio, or translated). At the time of writing, there is not a specific University procedure which would include alternative formats within FOI or publication scheme requests. Disability support services (which is located within Student Services) and Information Services are developing these services, and they may well be able to help, and these should be the first port of call for advice and assistance.

Sources of help for alternative formats

There is a translation service available for foreign languages from Dundee City Council's Translation & Interpretation Service in Mitchell Street – there is a website for this: http://www.dundeecity.gov.uk/a2z/interpreting, and email and telephone contact details: E translation@dundeecity.gov.uk T 01382 435825.

In addition, Grampian Regional Equality Council Ltd can provide translation services: https://sites.google.com/site/grec2website/ For British Sign Language, there is Deaflinks in Brown Street in Dundee: T 01382 201077. Deaflinks are setting up a communication booking service for interpreters, but there are two possible contacts if needed: Linda Duncan 07795254820, or Jennifer Ramsay 07906467425 (both freelance). The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) can also provide help as follows, via their RNIB Scotland Transcription Centre which can provide information in the accessible formats including audio-cassette, CD, DAISY, braille, Moon, large print and tactile diagrams:

http://www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/contactdetails/scotland/scotlandhelp/Pages/howwecanhelp.aspx

The University would not, however, charge anyone extra for these or other alternative formats for information, and of course it is are required to make "reasonable adjustments" under Equalities legislation when providing information, as well as in other respects.

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