

Requests received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) or the Data Protection Act (DPA) by the University of Greenwich in 2010, compared with 2009

1.1 Definition of an FOIA Request

Non-routine requests for information. (Routine requests for information which the university receives regularly are not counted.)

1.2 Numbers of FOIA Requests Received (as notified or directed to the Records Management Office)

These do not include requests for their own personal information from individuals, which is covered in Section 2, or requests for third party personal information, which is covered in Section 3. There has been a 25% increase in the number of FOI requests since the previous year. In fact we have already received 16 requests in January 2011.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2010	10	15	15	15	5	9	4	10	4	5	9	3	104
2009	5	7	4	9	5	4	8	5	9	5	7	7	75

Two of the requests received in 2010 were EIR requests, compared with one in 2009. Of the total number of requesters, 92 cited the legislation in 2010, compared with 65 in 2009.

1.3 Disclosure

	2010	2009
Disclosed in full	59	50
Disclosed in part	33	15
Not disclosed	12	10
	104	75

Reasons for non-disclosure:

	2010	2009
S21 accessible elsewhere	11	3
S22 future publication	3	
S40 personal information	6	6
S43 commercial interests	5	
Information not held fully or in part	16	7
No clarification	1	4
Over appropriate limit	6	
No longer required	2	
Vexatious	2	

More than one exemption is often used when answering an enquiry. This shows how requests increasingly are becoming more complex.

In 2010 one request was not completed in 20 working days. In 2009 five requests were not completed in the statutory timescale.

In 2009 we had no appeals against a decision not to disclose. In 2010 we had two. Of these two appeals, which were unfounded, one enquirer went on to complain to the Information Commissioner. We await the decision.

1.4 Who Made Requests

	2010	2009
The media	25	19
Trades union	3	2
External organisation	18	10
External individual	51	36
Student or ex-student	5	5
Staff or ex-staff	2	3
	104	75

Of the external individuals, some are probably journalists or researchers. Of the external organisations, some are campaigning groups, representative or professional bodies, others are marketing or research bodies.

1.5 Topics of Requests Received

	2010	2009
Estates and buildings	8	
Admissions	6	9
Teaching and assessment	7	12
Animal research	2	
Other research	1	1
Dissertations and theses		1
Management and administration of the university	13	4
Procurement issues	5	3
HR and staff issues	11	8
Student issues	19	28
Financial information	12	7
ICT issues	10	1
Commercial activities	4	1
Website	1	
Libraries	3	
Terrorism / extremism	2	
	104	75

We get a large number of requests asking for contact details of key people and senior staff at the university, as well as other salary and expenses data. A lot of journalists are looking for topics in order to write stories. Many companies are looking to sell their services, whether ICT or otherwise. Many requests are sent to all the universities, not just us. Some people have a complaint or issue with the university, and combine this with requests for information.

2.1 Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection Act received by the Data Protection Officer, and who they were from

A Subject Access Request (SAR) is a request for one's own personal information.

	2010	2009
Student (or ex-student)	6	13
Staff	4	
Solicitor on behalf of staff or student	4	7
Private individual (non-university)	1	
Total	15	20

Of these requesters, 7 cited the legislation in 2010, and 12 did in 2009.

2.2 Disclosure

	2010	2009
Disclosed in full	9	13
Disclosed in part	2	1
Not disclosed	4	6
Total	15	20

Reasons for non-disclosure:

	2010	2009
Information not held fully or in part	2	3
Third party data	1	1
Exam scripts	1	
Payment not received	2	3
Total	6	7

3.1 Requests for Third Party information under the Data Protection Act received by the Data Protection Officer, and who they were from

These are requests for personal information from third parties, typically enquiries from the police, local or central government into fraud, immigration issues, stolen credit cards and suchlike.

	2010	2009
Government department	3	6
Local authority	12	31
Police	17	18
NHS	3	
Solicitor	1	1
Private company	4	5
Other public body	1	2
Total	41	63

These figures appear to be falling, however a number of authorities are contacting other departments such as Student Records directly. These figures can be provided in the future, as they have recently begun to be logged.

3.2 Disclosure

	2010	2009
Disclosed in full	27	32
Disclosed in part	3	8
Not disclosed	11	23
Total	41	63

Some reasons for non-disclosure were that the information was not held, it was third party personal data, or the process of enquiry that we asked for was not followed.

4.1 Total Number of Requests

	2010	2009
FOI requests	104	75
Third Party requests (DPA)	41	63
Subject Access requests (DPA)	15	20
Total	160	158

4.2 Total Time Spent on Requests

Some FOI enquiries only took a few minutes to answer. On the other hand others will have taken many hours work. Under FOI we are allowed to charge above 18 hours of work – however very few requests go above this limit, and we have never charged, preferring to bring the request below 18 hours. Subject Access requests under DPA have a chargeable limit of £10 per request. While the total number of requests appears to have stayed the same, the number of FOI requests has increased, and so has the complexity. This could indicate an overall increase in awareness of the Act, and an increase in numbers of people who make requests.

How many requests took how much time:

	2010	2009
FOI requests – less than 1 day	89	69
FOI requests – between 1 and 5 days	15	6
DPA requests – less than 1 day	51	83
DPA requests – between 1 and 5 days	5	0
Total	160	158

Lucy Fincham, Records Manager, 02/02/11