



Many of the exemptions allow information to be withheld, but some are procedural and merely allow the particular request to be refused in that instance. Most importantly, if the information is available from elsewhere, such as from our publication scheme or from another source, the request *can* be refused, but the applicant should be given assistance in locating the information. So in fact, the University *may* still have to supply the information.

Consider whether an absolute exemption or a qualified exemption is to be employed.

If you wish to employ an absolute exemption the request can be refused. Refer to the Refusal process below for details (Section 6).

If the exemption is qualified you have to consider the Public Interest Test and judge if the **public interest is served more** by the withholding of the information (at the time the request is received). If so, only then can the information be withheld. Refer to the Refusal process below for details. Please seek guidance from the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Development) in employing the Public Interest Test.

#### **4. Consulting within the University and the Publication Scheme**

In order to establish a consistent response to requests for information (whether refusing or not) it is important that senior management consult with their peers, when they receive unusual, exempt-related or repeated requests.

Any requests received from journalists should be referred to the Registrar in the first instance.

By monitoring and discussing requests, a trend may be identified and consideration can be given to including *relevant information or records* in the University's Publication Scheme. The Scheme facilitates consistent delivery of what the University judges to be appropriate information and negates the need to repeatedly reply to similar requests from different people. It may be helpful to make a statement in the Scheme to the effect that certain information is not included because of an exemption. See "Freedom of Information Publication Scheme" on the University's "home page" website and contact the Registrar regarding the use and development of our scheme.

#### **5. Consulting externally**

Has the information requested been supplied by an external body? If we have not already done so we *may* need to consult that body to gain permission prior to release. Further guidance is available from <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/freedom> and the Registrar.

#### **6. Refusal process and Notice**

Please consult with the Registrar before the issue of a refusal notice.

It is recommended that informal methods aimed at coming to a resolution with the applicant should be explored before issuing a Refusal Notice.

When the University refuses a request it should try to explain its reasons clearly, not least because the Act provides applicants with rights to complain, firstly to the authority concerned and secondly to the Information Commissioner.

The University should issue a refusal notice within 20 working days of receipt of the request, excepting where the Public Interest Test is being considered, when a reasonable time is permitted. In such cases the applicant should be informed of the time required.

When an exemption is employed a refusal notice must include the following information:

- The fact of refusal

- The applicable exemption

- Why the exemption applies

- (if applicable) How the public interest test has been applied

- The University's Complaints Procedure

- The right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

A template "Refusal Notice" is available from the Registrar.

The complaints procedure should also be included with any notice served in response to a request, including a notice that we are still considering the request.

Information provided in confidence

Prohibitions on disclosure where a disclosure is prohibited by an enactment or would constitute contempt of court

## **8.2 Exemptions where the Public Interest Test applies**

Exemptions for which the institution has a duty to consider whether disclosure is required in the public interest are listed below. Where an institution considers that the public interest in withholding the information requested outweighs the public interest in releasing it, the institution must inform the applicant of its reasons, unless providing the reasoning would effectively mean releasing the exempt information.

Information intended for future publication

National security (other than information supplied by or relating to named