



## **The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) Publication Scheme**

This document is the Publication Scheme for the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). We have compiled this scheme to meet the statutory obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

For a paper copy of the Publication Scheme contact::

Chris Scrase  
Programme Manager  
OFFA  
Northavon House  
Coldharbour Lane  
BRISTOL  
BS16 1QD

Tel: 0117 931 7171  
Fax: 0117 931 7083  
Email: [enquiries@offa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@offa.org.uk)

## **Contents**

<b>Section 1: Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
What is a publication scheme	3
OFFA's publication scheme	3
<b>Section 2: How to access the information in our scheme</b>	<b>4</b>
Procedure for making requests	4
Formats of documents	4
<b>Section 3: Our charging policy</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 4: Feedback and further information</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Section 5: Guide to OFFA publication scheme</b>	<b>7</b>
Class A: Who we are and what we do	7
Class B: What we spend and how we spend it	12
Class C: What are our priorities and how are we doing	16
Class D: How we make decisions and records of decisions	19
Class E: Policies and procedures	21
Class F: List and registers	24

## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **What is a publication scheme?**

Publication schemes make it easier to find out what public bodies do and how they spend public money. They set out the information that a public authority has committed itself to make available and how this information can be obtained. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, all public authorities must adopt a publication scheme approved by the Information Commissioner. For more information about publication schemes, see the [Information Commissioner's Office](#) website.

### **OFFA's publication scheme**

OFFA's publication scheme follows the model publication scheme introduced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) on 1 January 2009.

We have divided the information in our publication scheme into the following six classes of information:

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What our priorities are and how we are doing
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers

(Please note that the ICO's model scheme has an additional class of information - 'The services we offer'. In OFFA's case, information in this class is covered by information we have already provided in the other information classes.)

### **We aim to make as much information available as possible**

Our publication scheme lists all the information we will make readily available to members of the public. We aim to make information available whenever we can legally do so, unless we consider that release would cause significant harm. In such cases we will withhold information under an appropriate exemption in the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. Where relevant, we will also comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and respect the privacy of individuals.

Some documents available under this Publication Scheme may have gaps in the text. This is because the information falls within an exemption. If this is the case the document will be clearly marked to show where information has been removed and the exemption used.

If you cannot find the information you want under our publication scheme, you can still ask if we have it and, if so, request to see it.

### **We will review our publication scheme annually**

We will add information to our scheme on an ongoing basis and review it annually.

## Section 2: How to access the information in our scheme

This publication scheme sets out the information we will make available and whether it is available online or in paper format. If the information is available online, we will give you the relevant link. If it's available in paper format (or not listed in our publication scheme), you need to contact us and tell us what information you want. Please follow the procedure set out below.

### Procedure for making requests

- Send your requests for a paper copy of information, or for information not listed in this scheme, to:

*Chris Scrase  
Programme Manager  
OFFA  
Northavon House  
Coldharbour Lane  
BRISTOL  
BS16 1QD*

fax 0117 931 7083

e-mail [enquiries@offa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@offa.org.uk)

- Your request should be in writing and should provide as much detail as possible to enable us to identify the information you want. Please include the following details:
  - your name and address
  - the information or documents you would like to access
  - the way you would like the information to be sent to you (for example, as hard copy, via e-mail etc)
- If you have difficulty in identifying the precise information you require, or are unable to make the application in writing, please contact us on 0117 931 7171.
- We will respond within 20 working days.

### Formats of documents

Many of the documents we hold are in Word or PDF format, and can be downloaded free of charge from our web-site. To read PDF documents you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is free to download from the Adobe web-site <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html>

## Section 3: Our charging policy

### We may charge a fee for dealing with your request

Our publication scheme shows where we may charge you a fee (for example, for printed documents). Under the Department of Constitutional Affairs fee regulations, we can charge for information requests as follows:

- A fee to cover **prescribed costs** (costs reasonably incurred in finding, sorting or editing material). This does not include costs involved with deciding whether the information is exempt. There is a threshold cost set at £450. Fees can only be charged where the prescribed costs exceed this threshold. Prescribed costs can be charged for in full for requests in excess of £450 at a standard rate of £25 per hour.
- The cost of **disbursements** (printing, copying and postage costs at a standard rate of 10p per sheet) can be charged in all cases.
- The regulations also allow for aggregation of costs where two or more requests on the same or related subject are received from one person or by different enquirers who appear to be involved in a campaign. These subsequent requests must be received before the 60th working day following the first request.

### Our charging policy for FOI requests

- OFFA will not normally charge for disbursements under £20, but reserves the right to charge on a case by case basis.
- We will not charge for the prescribed costs of dealing with FOI requests up to £450, calculated at a standard rate of £25 per hour. We will not normally agree to fulfil requests where the cost of locating, retrieving and producing the information is in excess of £450 but, where we agree to do so, we reserve the right to charge the full cost on a case by case basis. However, we will always aim to avoid having to make a charge by first discussing with you whether your request can be modified or refined to a more manageable level. Where charges apply or are likely to apply, we will notify you of the estimated charges before doing any charged work.
- Assuming we can meet your request, we will not charge for providing information in an alternative format if you are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), unless the original document was a priced publication. In this case, the charge for the alternative format will not exceed the cost of the original publication.
- We will not normally charge extra if you wish to have a hard copy of information rather than accessing it electronically from our website.
- If the information you want is readily accessible from another source, we may forward your request to the relevant authority. However, this may attract a charge.
- Where charges apply, we will ask you to pay us in full before we compile and supply information.

## **Section 4: Feedback and further information**

### **Send us your feedback**

We welcome feedback on our publication scheme. Please send your comments by e-mail to [enquiries@offa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@offa.org.uk) stating your name, organisation and contact details.

### **Further information**

For more information about any aspect of our publication scheme, please contact:

*Chris Scrase  
Programme Manager  
OFFA  
Northavon House  
Coldharbour Lane  
BRISTOL  
BS16 1QD*

Tel 0117 931 7053  
e-mail [enquiries@offa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@offa.org.uk)

## Section 5: Guide to OFFA Publication Scheme

Subject to possible exemptions, OFFA will publish, or intend to publish, information under the classes listed below.

### Class A: Who we are and what we do

#### A1

<b>Information</b>	<b>OFFA's role and responsibilities</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	Information about who we are and what we do can be found at: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

#### A2

<b>Information</b>	<b>Strategic Plan</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	See: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

### A3

<b>Information</b>	<b>OFFA staff and what they do</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	List of staff and brief description of their role.
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

### A4

<b>Information</b>	<b>OFFA organisational structure</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	Chart showing OFFA's organisational structure. Also gives information about the OFFA advisory body.
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

## A5

<b>Information</b>	<b>Legislative basis for our activities</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online and paper
<b>What's available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For information about the White Paper and 2004 Higher Education Act that established OFFA, see <a href="#">Background</a> panel under <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/</a></li><li>• Management Statement for OFFA. Drawn up by the then Department of Education and Skills, this sets out the broad framework within which OFFA operates. Available on request.</li></ul>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge online. An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

## A6

<b>Information</b>	<b>Organisations with whom we work in partnership</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online and paper
<b>What's available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills is our sponsoring department. For information about DIUS, see <a href="http://www.dius.gov.uk/">http://www.dius.gov.uk/</a> For the original guidance letter to OFFA from Charles Clarke, then Secretary of State for Education and Skills, see the <u>Background</u> panel under <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/</a></li><li>• We have a Service Level Agreement with the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) for the provision of accommodation, IT, finance and other services. For more information, see 'Financial results' in our most recent annual report under <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a> A copy of the Service Level Agreement is also available on request.</li><li>• We also work closely with the Higher Education Funding Council on Widening Participation Strategic Assessments (introduced in 2009). See:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Letter from John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, asking OFFA and HEFCE to look at how institutions could bring together their widening participation and fair access policies into a single document. Available on request.</li><li>- Guidance to institutions on how to produce their Widening Participation Strategic Assessment. See:</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge online. An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

**Comment [a1]:** Insert weblink from HEFCE website.

## A7

<b>Information</b>	<b>Senior staff biographies</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	Biographies are available for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sir Martin Harris, Director of Fair Access</li><li>• David Barrett, Assistant Director</li></ul>
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

## A8

<b>Information</b>	<b>Our location and contact details</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	See: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/contact-us/">http://www.offa.org.uk/contact-us/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

## A9

<b>Information</b>	<b>Media releases</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	For news and press releases from OFFA, see: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/category/news/">http://www.offa.org.uk/category/news/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

## Class B. What we spend and how we spend it

### B1

<b>Information</b>	<b>Financial Memorandum with DIUS (formerly DfES)</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	This financial memorandum, which forms part of the management statement for the Director of Fair Access, sets out in greater detail certain aspects of the financial framework within which the Director of Fair Access is required to operate.
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

### B2

<b>Information</b>	<b>List of contracts awarded and their value</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	List of contracts of sufficient size to have gone through formal tendering process
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

**B3**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Procurement policy and tendering processes</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	See paragraph 14 of our financial memorandum with DIUS (B1 above) for our procurement policy
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

**B4**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Staff pay and grading structures</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	<p>Our Service Level Agreement with the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) includes HR services. We therefore follow HEFCE pay and grading structures for all staff other than the Director of Fair Access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For details of HEFCE pay bands, please contact us on 0117 931 7171 or by e-mail: <a href="mailto:enquiries@offa.org.uk">enquiries@offa.org.uk</a></li> <li>• For details of the Director's salary, see our annual reports under <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge online.

**B5**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Accounts from last financial year</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	Our annual reports show our accounts for the last financial year. See: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

**B6**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Financial audit reports</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our accounts are audited by the National Audit Office (NAO). See our annual reports for details: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a></li><li>• For the National Audit Office value for money report into Widening Participation in Higher Education (published June 2008), see: <a href="http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/widening_participation_in_high.aspx">http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/widening_participation_in_high.aspx</a></li></ul>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

**B7**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Grant letters</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	Our annual grant letters show the funding we receive from DIUS (previously DfES) in each financial year.
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

## Class C. What are our priorities and how are we doing?

### C1

<b>Information</b>	<b>Strategic Plan</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	See our Strategic Plan under: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

### C2

<b>Information</b>	<b>Annual reports/reports to Parliament</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	See all our annual reports at: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

### C3

<b>Information</b>	<b>Internal/external performance reviews</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	We asked Pricewaterhouse Coopers to evaluate our access agreement monitoring process for 2006/07. A copy of their report is available on request.
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

#### **C4**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Service standards</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For our service standards in approving access agreements, see our 'Producing access agreements' guidance</li><li>• For our service standards in processing revisions to access agreements, see our Strategic Plan.</li></ul> <p>Both these publications are available at <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a></p>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

#### **C5**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Statistics produced in accordance with our requirements</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our 'Access agreement monitoring outcomes' publications show the monitoring outcomes produced as a result of our annual monitoring of access agreements</li><li>• Our annual reports show our performance against our key performance indicators</li></ul> <p>All these publications are available at <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a></p>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

**C6**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Public Service Agreements</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	<p>Public Service Agreements (PSAs) set out the key priority outcomes the Government wants to achieve over the next spending period. We help DIUS lead/contribute to the following PSAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSA 2 – Improve the skills of the population, as the way to ensuring a world class skills base by 2020</li> <li>• PSA 11 – Narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from lower income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers</li> <li>• PSA 15 - Address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief</li> </ul> <p>For more information on the DIUS contribution to PSAs, see its business plan, particularly pages 7, 10 and 39. See <a href="http://www.dius.gov.uk/business-plan.html">http://www.dius.gov.uk/business-plan.html</a></p> <p>For more information on PSAs generally, see the Treasury website, particularly <a href="http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pbr_csr07_psaindex.htm">http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pbr_csr07_psaindex.htm</a></p>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

**C7**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Annual business plans</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	Our annual business plans show our main objectives for the year ahead.
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

## Class D. How we make decisions and records of decisions

### D1

<b>Information</b>	<b>Record of decisions and decision making processes</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	<p>Our decisions and decision making processes relate primarily to the approval and monitoring of access agreements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our 'Access agreement monitoring outcomes' publications show the outcomes of our annual monitoring of access agreements</li> <li>• Our 'Access agreement monitoring' guidance publications give our guidance for institutions completing their annual monitoring return</li> <li>• Our 'Producing access agreements' guidance gives our guidance to institutions drawing up a new access agreement.</li> </ul> <p>All these publications are available at <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our guidance notes show our decisions/guidance on particular aspects of drawing up and maintaining an access agreement – see <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/access-agreements/guidance-notes/">http://www.offa.org.uk/access-agreements/guidance-notes/</a></li> <li>• Our published list of access agreements shows the access agreements currently approved by the Director of Fair Access. See <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/access-agreements/a-z/">http://www.offa.org.uk/access-agreements/a-z/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

## D2

<b>Information</b>	<b>Publications</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	All our publications are available at <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

## Class E. Policies and Procedures

### E1

<b>Information</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	Our Service Level Agreement with the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) includes HR services. We therefore follow HEFCE's action plan to promote race, disability and gender equality. See: <a href="http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_01/">http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_01/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

### E2

<b>Information</b>	<b>Human resources policies and procedures</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	Our Service Level Agreement with the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) includes HR services. We therefore follow their policies and procedures for staff recruitment and selection, training and development, health and safety etc. For information about any of these policies, please contact us on 0117 931 7171 or by e-mail: <a href="mailto:enquiries@offa.org.uk">enquiries@offa.org.uk</a>
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

**E3**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Requesting information from OFFA</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	For information about our responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act and how to request information from us, see: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/foi/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/foi/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

**E4**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Complaints</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online and paper
<b>What's available</b>	<p>For information about complaints from members of the public, students and prospective students, see: <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/complaints-policy/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/complaints-policy/</a></p> <p>For information about how institutions can appeal if we reject their access agreement, see our 'Producing access agreements' guidance under <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/">http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/</a></p> <p>For information about how to complain if you are unhappy with the way we have dealt with a request under the Freedom of Information Act, please request our FOI appeals policy.</p>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

**E5**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Records management and personal data policies</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	Our Service Level Agreement with the Higher Education Funding Council includes IT services. We therefore follow HEFCE policies and procedures on records retention, data protection etc. For information about any of these policies, please contact us on 0117 931 7171 or by e-mail: enquiries@offa.org.uk
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

**E6**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Charges for information requests</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	Our aim is to make as much information as possible freely available. However, we may charge for responding to some requests. For details, see 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

## Class F. Lists and registers

### F1

<b>Information</b>	<b>List of access agreements</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Online
<b>What's available</b>	Our list of access agreements shows the access agreements currently approved by the Director of Fair Access. See <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk/access-agreements/a-z/">http://www.offa.org.uk/access-agreements/a-z/</a>
<b>Notes</b>	No charge

### F2

<b>Information</b>	<b>Register of gifts and hospitality</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	We keep a register of gifts/hospitality received by the Director of Fair Access.
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

### F3

<b>Information</b>	<b>Registers of interests</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Register of interests for Director of Fair Access</li><li>• Register of interests for OFFA advisory group</li></ul>
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

**F4**

<b>Information</b>	<b>Freedom of Information disclosure log</b>
<b>Status</b>	Open
<b>Availability</b>	Paper
<b>What's available</b>	Log showing requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.
<b>Notes</b>	An administrative cost may be charged for paper documents. See 'Our charging policy' on page 5 of this guide.

Ends