Freedom of Information Act 2000

What does it mean for us?
An Introduction
Principal requirements

- Right of Access
  - From 1 January 2005
- Publication scheme
  - Must publish in line with obligations
- Records management
  - Offers business benefits too
The City University Publication Scheme

- What we intend to publish as a matter of course
- How it is published
- How it can be accessed
- Any fees payable
- On-going process
- www.city.ac.uk/foi
Requests for Information

- Anyone, anywhere can ask for anything held
- Cannot ask why they want to know
- Maximum of 20 working days to respond
- Must be in writing, and include name and address of applicant
- Must describe information requested

Applicants do not need to refer to the Act or state they are making a request for information.

Complaints Procedure

(www.city.ac.uk/ic/complaints)
Right to information, subject to:

- Fees
- Cost ceilings
- Vexatious or repeated requests
- Further information provided
- The exemptions
Implications for staff

- Any request for information must be answered
  - in 20 working days
  - We cannot ask why they want to know

- If it is in your remit and you have no concerns, answer it
  - Otherwise contact the Head of Information Compliance & Policy

- Make sure someone can find your information in your absence

- All documents & e-mails may be open to accessible
The University for business and the professions

The reality of FOI:

- Covers all information ‘held’, regardless of form in which recorded
- Fully retrospective
- Anyone can apply for information
- All written requests for information to be dealt with in 20 working days*
- There is no exemption for embarrassment
- There are implications for the private sector
The exemptions

• Absolute exemptions
  – No right of access under FOI
  – There may be another means of getting access to information

• Qualified exemptions
  – Even if the exemption applies, authorities must disclose if it is in the public interest to do so
What about personal information?

- Requesting information about yourself
- Requesting information about others
- www.city.ac.uk/ic/dataprotection
Summary

- FoIA assumes information will be disclosed
- Must publish information as described in its Publication Scheme
- Must help people to submit requests where necessary
- Information must be retained only as long as necessary - and must be disposed of properly
- Must ensure that data are accessible to respond to access requests promptly
- It is a criminal offence to tamper with existing records that have been requested for disclosure
Where can I get further help?

For advice and assistance contact The Head of Information Compliance & Policy

www.city.ac.uk/ic
foi@city.ac.uk
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk